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RATIONAL THEOLOGY

AND

CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHY

Εἰκὼν μὲν γὰρ Θεοῦ Λόγος θεῖος καὶ βασιλικός, . . . εἰκὼν δὲ εἰκόνος ἀνθρώπινος Νοῦς—"The image of God is the divine and royal Logos, and the image of the image is the human Reason."—Clem. Alex., Strom., lib. v. c. 14.

נֵר יְהוָה נִשְׁמַת אָדָם—"The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord." ("The lamp of the Lord is the Soul of Man.")—Prov. xx. 27.

RATIONAL THEOLOGY

AND

CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHY

IN ENGLAND

IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

BY

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RATIONAL THEOLOGY

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IN ENGLAND.

I.

HISTORICAL POSITION OF THE CAMBRIDGE SCHOOL —PHILOSOPHY AND CHRISTIANITY.

With the advance of the seventeenth century, the rational spirit broadened and took to itself larger intellectual elements. It extended beyond the sphere of the Church, into the whole region of spiritual thought and philosophy. There remains to us, in this volume, the task of sketching this further stage in the intellectual and theological development of the English mind.

The ideas of religious authority, and the constitution of the Church, were the centres round which the preceding movement revolved. What makes the Church?—or, in other words, what are the essential terms of Christian communion and the

conditions of national Christian organisation?—were the great questions of the time to which the spirit of religious inquiry sought an answer. All other questions were subordinate, even those arising out of the Synod of Dort and the progress of Arminianism. These helped to quicken the national consciousness, but the mainsprings of its action were the stirring ecclesiastical difficulties. Two parties stood opposed, each professing a theory of the Church which admitted of no compromise. Inheriting alike the medieval idea of theological and ritual uniformity—which the Reformation had failed to destroy—they interpreted this idea in diverse directions, and so stood face to face in hopeless discord. Equally exclusive, and claiming each to absorb the national life, it was inevitable that they should clash in a violent trial of strength. The intensity of the conflict was proportioned to the intensity of the division betwixt parties, sundered, not only by political differences, but by rival ideals of religious government and worship, which they interpreted respectively as of divine authority.

It was the merit of Hales and Chillingworth and Taylor, attached as they were personally to one side in this struggle, that they penetrated beneath the theoretical narrowness which enslaved both sides, and grasped the idea of the Church more profoundly and comprehensively. They saw the inconsistency of a formal *jus divinum* with the essential spirit of Protestantism, imperfectly as this spirit had been developed in England, or, indeed, elsewhere. According to this spirit the true

idea of the Church is moral, and not ritual. It consists in certain verities of faith and worship, rather than in any formal unities of creed or order. The genuine basis of Christian communion is to be found in a common recognition of the great realities of Christian thought and life, and not in any outward adhesion to a definite ecclesiastical or theological system. All who profess the Apostles' Creed are members of the Church, and the national worship should be so ordered as to admit of all who make this profession. The purpose of these Churchmen, in short, was comprehension, and not exclusion. While they held that no single type of Church government and worship was absolutely divine, they acknowledged in different forms of Church order an expression more or less of the divine ideas which lie at the root of all Christian society, and which—and not any accident of external form—give to that society its essential character. In a word, the Church appeared to them the more divine, the more ample the spiritual activities it embraced, and the less the circle of heresy or dissent it cut off. This breadth and toleration separated them alike from Prelatists and Puritans.

Whatever we may think of the position and character of these men otherwise, they were the true authors of our modern religious liberty. To the Puritans we owe much. They vindicated the dignity of popular rights and the independence due to the religious conscience. Save for the stern stand which they made in the seventeenth century, many of the elements which have grown into our national great-

ness, and given robustness to our common national life, would not have had free scope. But it argues a singular ignorance of the avowed aims of the Presbyterian party and the notorious principles of the Puritan theology, to attribute to them the origin of the idea of religious liberty. As a party, the Presbyterians expressly repudiated this idea. Their dogmatism was inflexible. The Church, according to them, was absolutely authoritative over religious opinion no less than religious practice. It could tolerate no differences of creed. The distinction of fundamental and non-fundamental articles of belief, elaborately maintained by Chillingworth and Taylor, was held to be dangerous heresy; and the principle of latitude, with all the essential ideas of free thought which have sprung out of it, was esteemed unchristian. These ideas are to be found in the writings of the liberal Churchmen of the seventeenth century, and nowhere else in England at that time—at least, nowhere else broadly and systematically expounded.

It is necessary to vindicate the distinction of these men, because history hitherto has hardly done justice to them. They have been forgotten amidst the more noisy parties of their time, between whom they sought to mediate. As they fell aside personally unsupported by either Prelatists or Puritans, so their influence has passed out of notice and remained unhonoured in the pages of our popular historians. What they really did for the cause of religious thought has never been adequately appreciated. They worked with too little combination and con-

sistency. But it is impossible in any real study of the age not to recognise the significance of their labours, or to fail to see how much the higher movement of the national mind was due to them, while others carried the religious and civil struggle forward to its sterner issues.

But before this line of ecclesiastical liberalism had expended itself there had begun a new and deeper movement of religious thought in England—a movement, like the former, initiated and carried on by divines of the Church of England, but distinguished from it by certain interesting contrasts. The inquiring spirit awakened by the religious contentions of the time took a bolder and broader turn as these contentions became more radical and sweeping. From Church politics it passed into the general sphere of religious and philosophical discussion. Whereas the former movement was mainly ecclesiastical, aiming at a wider extension of the Anglican Church system, this movement was mainly philosophical, and had directly in view the interests of rational religion. To vindicate for the Church a more liberal constitution, and a certain "liberty of prophesying," was the special problem with liberal thinkers in the first half of the seventeenth century. With the progress of the century this problem had by no means disappeared. On the contrary, it emerged again in a distinctive political shape in the end of the century. But other and higher problems had in the mean time arisen. Questions affecting the nature of religion itself, the limits of

theological dogmatism and the consequent value of "orthodoxy," and, more than all, questions touching the very essence of religious and moral principles in the face of a new spirit of speculation, had come to the front. It is with such questions we shall find that our next group of divines deals. Starting with many of the same thoughts as Hales and Chillingworth, their liberalism takes a higher flight. They aim, not only nor chiefly, at ecclesiastical comprehension, but to find a higher organon of Christian thought than any religious school had yet attempted, and to vindicate the essential principles of Christian philosophy both against dogmatic excesses within the Church and philosophical extravagances without it.

The superficial contrasts betwixt the two movements are curious, and in one respect highly significant. While the former was mainly connected with Oxford, and drew from this university its primary and special inspiration,[1] the second is almost exclusively connected with Cambridge. It is represented throughout by a succession of well-known Cambridge divines, sometimes spoken of as "Latitudinarians," and sometimes as "Cambridge Platonists." The chief names in this illustrious succession are Benjamin Whichcote, John Smith, Ralph Cudworth, and Henry More. Apart from the affinities of thought, which bind these men together into one of the most

[1] It will be remembered that even Taylor, although educated at Cambridge, was appointed very early by Laud to a Fellowship at Oxford — namely, to All Souls', 1636—just at the time that Chillingworth was engaged in his great work, which appeared at the close of 1637.

characteristic groups in the history of religious and philosophical thought in England, they were all closely united by personal and academic associations. In this respect they stand much more distinctively by themselves than our former group. They constitute a school of opinion in a far more real and effective sense.

Another point of contrast is more noteworthy. While Hales and Chillingworth and Taylor came forth from the High Church and Royalist side in the great struggle of the century, and were all of them personal friends of Laud, the Cambridge divines, on the contrary, sprang from the Puritan side. They were successors of the men displaced by the Puritan authorities in 1644. They owed their position first of all to the triumphant Parliament, and they were secured and encouraged in it by the great Protector. Moreover, with a single exception,[1] they were all educated at the famous Puritan College, Emmanuel. This serves to throw light at once on their personal concert, and the common springs of thought which moved them. It is far from accidental that in tracing the course of liberal religious thought in the seventeenth century—a comparatively narrow stream running betwixt high banks of authoritative dogmatism—we should have to turn, in the progress of our research, from one side to the other—from the sacerdotalism of Laud to the orthodoxy of the Westminster Assembly. The change is only a natural one arising out of the altered position of parties, and the new balance of forces affecting the national mind.

[1] More.

The spirit of inquiry in every age springs, by way of reaction, from the prevailing dogmatism with which it comes in contact. Reason is aroused in the face of the authority that is most urgent and dominant. It is only, therefore, what we might expect when we find the Cambridge movement connected in its beginning with certain discussions betwixt Whichcote and Tuckney, who was his old tutor at Emmanuel, and afterwards associated with him in the university.

But we shall be better able to understand the effect of this spirit of reaction, and also the special philosophical character of the movement, by taking a glance at the religious circumstances which meet us about the middle of the century, and the new speculative influences which had begun to move the higher minds of the time. The Cambridge Platonists, like every other group of thinkers, stand closely in connection with their age, at once interpreting its greater thoughts and carrying them onwards to new developments. They can only be understood as the product of the most active intellectual elements of the generation which they so prominently represented and adorned.

1. Towards the middle of the seventeenth century an obvious turn can be traced in the religious spirit of England. The question of the Church was no longer pressing. While far from being settled, it seemed for the time indefinitely postponed under the strong rule of the military power which had risen to pre-eminence on the ruins of every other authority. But if ecclesiastical disputes no longer vexed the

national temper in the same degree, theological polemics raged more fiercely than ever. Numerous sects had sprung up, each claiming to represent the divine mind, and to expound a universal truth to a distracted people. These sects were obnoxious alike to both the old parties, to the Puritans even more than to the Prelatists. They are spoken of as "Anti-Scripturists, Familists, Antinomians, Anti-Trinitarians, Arians, Anabaptists."[1] The tenets of many of them were no doubt at variance with all the theologies hitherto accepted, even should we receive with abatement the Puritan description that they were "the very dregs and spawn of old accursed heresies which had been already condemned, dead, buried, and rotten in their graves long ago."[2] But they served to raise fundamental questions which had not hitherto been discussed. If they revolted the sober-minded, they were yet promulgated by enthusiasts as truths from heaven, and received by many as such. Their authors broached them expressly as "new lights—new truths;" and in doing so they alleged the same divine authority which the Puritans had been the first to evoke against the Church. All classes of sectaries put themselves forward with the same pertinacity as the children of the Reformation and the true interpreters of a renovated Christianity. In the face of such conflicting pretensions, it was inevitable that religious inquiry should

[1] "A testimony of the ministers in the province of Essex;" also, "A testimony subscribed by the ministers within the province of London, against the errors, heresies, and blasphemies of these times. London." 1647 and 1648.

[2] Ibid.

go deeper and take a more comprehensive range than hitherto. What was the real nature of religion thus diversely represented? How was religious truth to be discriminated? And what was the use of reason in relation to it? Such were the questions more or less directly suggested by the very atmosphere of discussion in which these sects lived, and which they propagated far beyond their own circle.

It may seem strange that so many wild opinions should have begun to spread during the very years that the Westminster Assembly was sitting. Within the Assembly itself it is well known there were little or no differences of doctrinal opinion. Its theology bears the special stamp of rigorous dogmatic uniformity. But the wave of religious excitement, in the flow of which Presbyterian Calvinism had triumphed and the Assembly had been convened, passed far beyond the bounds of its control. The enthusiasm which had been so powerfully called forth was not to be restrained on its spiritual any more than on its political side. In both respects it outran all calculation, and proved too strong for the authority which had enlisted it. If the Westminster divines had possessed the power, they would have put a speedy check upon the upspringing fanaticisms which grieved and alarmed them.[1] Their wish to do so is beyond dispute. They saw nothing but the devil's handiwork in the sectarian growths which appeared

[1] "Abominable errors, damnable heresies, and horrid blasphemies," the Puritan testimonies already quoted say, "to be lamented if it were possible with tears of blood."

profusely around them. It was as if the enemy had come by night and sown tares among the fair wheat which they had planted. But the civil power began to fail them in the very hour of their triumph. And while able to carry through their dogmatic decrees with a singular unanimity, and even to obtain Parliamentary sanction for them, they yet had no means of enforcing them. The decrees remained a great monument of legislative theology; but the legislature did not venture to impose them by external authority. They were left to tell by the weight of their own intrinsic credibility. And the times were too insurrectionary to defer to such an authority as this.

There is even good reason to conclude that the ultra-dogmatic character of the Westminster Confession of Faith was itself among the chief reasons of the reaction to a more liberal theology. It was not merely that the theological mind, which had been so rigidly bent in one direction, had a natural tendency to swing back to a laxer curve; but there was evidently a strong necessity felt by some of the younger clergy, trained in the traditions of the Puritan school, to turn men's thoughts from the polemical details which had so much engrossed them, to other, and as they supposed higher, aspects of religious truth. Two things seem especially to have impressed them—the need of some broader and more conciliatory principles of theology to act as solvents of the interminable disputes which raged around them, and the need of bringing into more direct prominence the practical and moral side of religion.

These two things, it will be seen, became closely connected in their minds.

The Puritan theology in the seventeenth century, with all its noble attainments, was both intolerant and theoretical in a high degree. It would admit of no rival near its throne; it was impatient of even the least variation from the language of orthodoxy. It emphasised all the transcendental and divine aspects of Christian truth, rendering them into theories highly definite and consistent, but in their very consistency disregardful of moral facts and the complexities of practical life. Younger theologians, of a reflective turn, looked on the one hand at this compact mass of doctrinal divinity, measuring the whole circle of religious thought, and carefully articulated in all its parts; and, on the other hand, at the state of the religious world and the Church around them. The sense of schism between theory and practice—between divinity and morals—was painfully brought home to them. It was no wonder if they began to ask themselves whether there was not a more excellent way, and whether reason and morality were not essential elements of all religious dogma. Their minds were almost necessarily driven towards what was termed in reproach by the older Puritans "a kind of moral divinity."[1] Longing for peace and a higher and more beneficent action of Christian brotherhood, they naturally turned in a different direction from that which had been so little fruitful of either. They sought to soften down instead of sharpening doctrinal distinctions, to bring

[1] A phrase of Tuckney's in his second letter to Whichcote.

out points of agreement instead of points of difference in the prevailing medley of religious opinions. Especially they tried to find a common centre of thought and action in certain universal principles of religious sentiment rather than in the more abstruse conclusions of polemical theology. They became, in short, eclectics against the theological dogmatism and narrowness of their time, very much as Hales and Chillingworth became advocates of comprehension against the ecclesiastical dogmatism and narrowness of theirs.

2. But there were other, higher, and perhaps more direct, causes which contributed to the rise of the Cambridge movement, and imparted to it its peculiar character. It was the outcome not merely of a new growth of religious sentiment, but of a determinate series of speculative influences which distinguish the century not less than its religious agitations. It is this double feature which gives to the movement its chief significance, and its best claims to historical commemoration. It not only carried forward the tide of religious liberality, but it took up and moulded into a definite form of its own all the nobler intellectual tendencies of the time. Without exception the Cambridge latitudinarian divines may be termed religious philosophers. Some deserve this epithet more conspicuously than others; but all deserve it more or less. In their writings we pass into a higher, if not more bracing, atmosphere than that in which we have been dwelling in the pages of Hales and Chillingworth. They discussed larger questions and principles of a more fundamental and

far-reaching character. They sought, in a word, to marry philosophy to religion, and to confirm the union on the indestructible basis of reason and the essential elements of our higher humanity. This was their special ambition; and it was a grand ambition, whatever we may think of its success. It was the first elaborate attempt to wed Christianity and philosophy made by any Protestant school; and it may be even said to have been the first true attempt of the kind since the days of the great Alexandrine teachers.[1] For the Christian philosophies of the middle ages, noble as many of them were, did not originate in a free interchange of philosophic and religious affection. Philosophy, even in the hands of so vigorous and independent a thinker as Anselm —still more in the hands of his successors, the great schoolmen of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries —was the servitor rather than the handmaid of faith. It had no life of its own apart from the Church, and therefore could not enter into any free voluntary union with it. But with the revival of a new speculative spirit in Europe in the seventeenth century, the question of the relations of philosophy and religion once more became a vital interest, fruitful of good or evil to human progress. It is the glory of the Cambridge divines that they welcomed this new spirit of speculation—gave it frank entertainment in

[1] The Florentine movement in the latter part of the fifteenth century is hardly an exception. Marsilius Ficinus and the two Pici of Mirandola—uncle and nephew—were not theologians, although animated by a profound theological instinct. The Academy of the Medici, of which they were the ornaments, was, in part at least, literary and humanistic in its tendencies.

their halls of learning; and, while enriching it with a culture all their own, sought to fuse it by the spontaneous action of their own thoughtfulness into a philosophy of religion at once free and conservative, in which the rights of faith and the claims of the speculative intellect should each have free scope, and blend together for mutual elevation and strength.

It is not easy to trace the distinct steps by which the new speculative spirit, which marks the rise of modern philosophy in the first half of the seventeenth century, passed to Cambridge; nor is it easy to determine the share which each of the great representatives of this spirit had in evoking our school of thought. The writings both of Bacon and Descartes exercised a definite influence in the university by the middle of the century; but we cannot clearly trace the growth of this influence, nor mark how far the one and how far the other contributed to awaken the speculative life of its teachers. As the 'Novum Organon' had appeared as early as 1620, it might be supposed that the Baconian philosophy would have been the first to operate upon the academic mind of England, and to give to it its special caste of philosophical culture. But the facts do not answer to this expectation. There are no indications that the writings of Bacon, for many years after their appearance, exercised any influence on the studies of either of the universities. On the contrary, we possess the most clear and satisfactory evidence that the old scholasticism held its ground at Cambridge for at least twenty years after the publication of the 'Novum Organon,' as if no breath

whatever of new life had stirred the speculative atmosphere. Not to speak of other sources, this is amply proved by all we know of Cambridge University studies in the interval. Jeremy Taylor, for example, was a student during the years 1626-33; and although imaginary pictures have been drawn of the stimulating effect of the new philosophy upon a richly susceptible mind like his, it is clear that he really knew nothing of this philosophy, as he was certainly in no degree influenced by it. In the whole caste of his thought, and his mode of treating moral and semi-speculative questions, Taylor belongs to the old mediæval school. But we possess more definite evidence than this. During almost the same course of years as Taylor studied at Cambridge, there was a still greater student there — John Milton; and Milton's college exercises are preserved and have been published.[1] They are a curious picture of the frivolities of the scholastic system, and serve to show how entirely this system still dominated in the university. They discuss such questions as the "music of the spheres;" "whether day or night is the more excellent?" "whether there are not partial forms in an animal in addition to the whole?" The very statement of such questions carries the mind beyond Bacon to that study of words rather than of things against which he protested. Students of Milton will also remember the poem written by him as a vacation exercise in the nineteenth year of his age, or in the year 1627, in which Ens, "as Father of the Predicaments," along

[1] Masson's Life of Milton, vol. i.

with Substance, Quantity, Quality, and Relation, "his sons," is represented as speaking. It is clear that the scholastic spirit, if degenerate in strength, had yet during these years lost nothing of its hold upon the plan of Cambridge education. The academic mind remained unmoved by anything higher; and there is little doubt that the poet was thinking of his own philosophic nurture in those years, when he afterwards denounced the traditionary education as "an asinine feast of sow-thistles and brambles."[1]

It was not till fully ten years later, when both Jeremy Taylor and Milton were actively engaged in the religious struggle of their age, that Bacon and Descartes began to be studied at Cambridge. The latter appears then as the more powerful influence; at least, his influence can be traced more directly. Henry More carried on an elaborate correspondence in Latin with Descartes in the years 1648-49, in which he expresses himself as an admiring student, and implies that the Cartesian philosophy had already obtained a recognised footing in Cambridge in opposition to the expiring scholasticism.[2] It is easy to understand More's enthusiasm for a philosophy which, as he says, was "not only delightful to read, but especially useful in its bearing on that which is the highest end of all philosophy—namely, religion."[3] Descartes not only furnished a

[1] Tractate on Education, 1644.

[2] Descartes' 'Discourse on Method' appeared in 1637, his 'Meditations' in 1641, and 'Principles of Philosophy' in 1644.

[3] More's Letter to Claudius Clerselier, introductory to his Correspondence with Descartes—'Collection of More's Philosophical Writings,' p. 59. London. 1662.

new method to the awakening speculative spirit, but he addressed himself to the same great questions concerning the existence of God and the nature of spirit and matter, which formed the philosophic summit, to which all the lower inquiries of the Cambridge divines led up. It was only natural, therefore, that his writings should have called forth responsive enthusiasm at Cambridge. They did not awaken the speculative spirit there; it had already begun to stir under native impulses; but they met it, and so far directed it. The Cambridge teachers—most of all, perhaps, Henry More himself—were men very different from Descartes. Their mode of thought presents a striking contrast to that of the calmly sceptical, direct, and geometric French thinker. In no special sense can they be called his pupils or followers. But they move with him under the same common force; they are so far inspired by the same common aim. Both sought to ground the highest truth on a clear and immutable basis of reason—Descartes working towards this end from the philosophical, Cudworth and More from the theological side. The main thought of both was the same, although they approached it differently. For it is a mistake to represent Descartes as, no less than Bacon, separating philosophy from religion, and desiring to keep them asunder. He only separated the one as well as the other from tradition, in order that he might reunite them in the great centre of reason, and plant them together there on a sure foundation. And this, too, was the very aim of

the Cambridge Platonists;—only they contemplated the problem as Christian theologians. Descartes contemplated it as a pure thinker and speculative enthusiast.

The spirit of the Baconian philosophy has much less affinity with any of the writers of the Cambridge school. For, first of all, Bacon openly proclaims a divorce betwixt philosophy and Christian theology. While the one is supposed by him to follow "the light of nature," "the other," he says, "is grounded only upon the Word and Oracle of God."[1] He shrinks, therefore, from applying any of the tests of his philosophical method to the investigation of Christian truth. Should he "step out of the bark of human reason and pass into the ship of the Church," it is only the "divine compass" which can "rightly direct his course." "Neither," he adds, "will the stars of philosophy which have hitherto conspicuously shone on us any more give their light, so that on this subject it will be as well to keep silence."[2] He speaks also timidly and vaguely, although in some respects finely, of the use of reason in religion. It has nothing to do with the primary principles or articles of religious truth. These are exempted from its examination, and given upon authority not to be questioned. They are not only *posita*, but

[1] Advancement of Learning, b. ii. See also lib. non. 'De Augmentis Scientiarum.'

[2] "Veruntamen si eam tractare pergamus exeundum nobis foret e navicula rationis humanæ et transeundum in Ecclesiæ navem, quæ sola acu nautica divina pollet ad cursum recte dirigendum. Neque enim sufficient amplius stellæ philosophiæ, quæ hactenus præcipue nobis affulserunt: itaque par foret, silentium quoque in hac re colere."—De Augmentis, l. n.

placita.[1] It is scarcely possible to avoid the suspicion that on such subjects Bacon does not speak his whole mind, or, at any rate, that his mind was not directed to them with any clear and consistent energy. We seem to catch the tone of the courtier[2] and politician rather than of the courageous and enlightened thinker.

The Cambridge Platonists were not likely to borrow directly from such a scheme of thought as this, nor to feel much sympathy with the spirit of Baconian reserve and caution. Their temper and drift of mind were entirely different. Nor can it be said that there is any trace of the special study of

[1] "The use of human reason in religion is of two sorts: the former, in the conception and apprehension of the mysteries of God to us revealed; the other, in the inferring and deriving of doctrine and direction thereupon. The former extendeth to the mysteries themselves; but how? By way of illustration, and not by way of argument. The latter consisteth indeed of probation and argument. In the former, we see, God vouchsafeth to descend to our capacity, in the expression of his mysteries in sort as may be sensible unto us; and doth graft his revelations and holy doctrine upon the notions of our reason, and applyeth his inspirations to open our understanding, as the form of the key to the ward of the lock. For the latter, there is allowed us a use of reason and argument, secondary and respective although not original and absolute. For after the articles and principles of religion are placed and exempted from examination of reason, it is then permitted unto us to make derivations and inferences from and according to the analogy of them, for our better direction. In nature this holdeth not, for both the principles are examinable by induction, though not by a medium of syllogism; and besides, those principles or first positions have not discordance with that reason which draweth down and deduceth the inferior positions. But yet it holdeth not in religion alone, but in many knowledges, both of greater and smaller nature, namely, wherein there are not only *posita* but *placita*." — Advancement of Learning, b. ii.

[2] The Books of the 'De Augmentis' are severally dedicated *Ad Regem suum*.

Bacon in their writings—certainly not in the most characteristic of them. Yet Baconianism was not without its influence upon the rising school of liberal divines, as it was undoubtedly a powerful element of culture at Cambridge from about the middle of the century. Isaac Barrow, who took his degree of Bachelor of Arts in 1648, studied Bacon closely as well as Descartes; and John Ray, the celebrated naturalist, was the companion of his studies. These men are the direct and genuine representatives of the experimental philosophy. They adopted its method, and carried forward the course of scientific research which, half a century later, reached such grand results in the labours of Sir Isaac Newton, Barrow's illustrious successor in the mathematical chair. But Baconianism, like every other great movement of thought, extended far beyond its direct followers. It diffused itself as a general intellectual influence, and became a part—in some respects the most conspicuous part—of the higher spirit of the age in which all active and forward minds shared. There was no school of thought in the second half of the century which can be said to have been independent of it; and, as the most prominent opponent of the old scholastic system, it was apt to receive the credit of the whole movement against it, and to be taken as the type of the freer intellectual life which had everywhere begun to prevail.

There can be no doubt that at the time of the Restoration the Cambridge divines were identified in public estimation with the progress of a new

philosophy in opposition to that of Aristotle and the traditionary methods of inquiry. In a curious pamphlet[1] of 1662, which professes to give a brief account of them, under the name of "the new sect of Latitude-men," the point chiefly emphasised is their supposed connection with this new or "mechanical philosophy." The pamphlet is throughout a spirited composition, not without lively touches of description, which may afterwards engage us; but its chief interest for our present purpose is the attempt which it makes to depict, under a sort of allegory, the philosophical position of the Latitudinarian school. Religion or the Church is represented under the figure of an "ancient clock, the property of a certain husbandman in an old mansion-house, which had been a long while out of kelter" (order), and needed to be repaired. A succession of persons, supposed to denote the diverse sects of philosophy, essay to mend it: "a certain peripatetic artificer, something above the degree of a tinker;" "a clock-maker from the next town, who thought himself well read in clock philosophy;" the farmer's

[1] The pamphlet purports to be written by S. P., of Cambridge. S. P. has been supposed to be Simon Patrick, afterwards Bishop of Ely, a friend of Tillotson, and, along with him, a pupil of the Cambridge divines; but the evidence connecting him with its authorship is not conclusive. See preface to a new edition of Patrick's works, University Press, Oxford, 1858, by the Rev. Alexander Taylor, M.A., Michel Fellow of Queen's College, Oxford—a preface admirable both in point of thought and composition. The full title of the pamphlet is, 'A Brief Account of the New Sect of Latitude-men: together with some Reflections upon the New Philosophy.' In its original form it is extremely rare, but it may be found in a Collection of Tracts well known under the name of 'The Phenix' to all students of the seventeenth century.

son "newly come from the university," "inept at understanding things, but apt, parrot-like, to catch at words." All, however, fail to do the clock any good, till the landlord of the farmer, "an ingenious gentleman who had used to take in pieces his own watch and set it together again," takes the matter in hand, impatient of all the jargon he has heard, and explains to the owner the simple mechanical construction of the instrument, and what was needed to put it right. There is a want of clearness and consistency in the representation. It is by no means evident what special systems beyond the scholastic the writer intends to ridicule. But there can be no doubt of his intention to exalt the new or mechanical philosophy, and that the philosophy he has chiefly in view under this name is that of Descartes, "who hath proceeded farthest" in attempts to explain "that vast Machine—the Universe." "To them that have once tasted of the mechanical philosophy, forms and qualities are likely to give as little satisfaction as the clock-maker did to the intelligent gentleman in the story." So far from being inimical to a sound divinity, the philosophy will prove its best support. It will be faithful to Christianity "no less against the open violence of atheism than the secret treachery of enthusiasm and superstition." "Nor will it be possible," the author concludes, "otherwise to free religion from scorn and contempt, if her priests be not as well skilled in nature as the people, and her champions furnished with as good artillery as her enemies." All this plainly implies that the "Latitudemen" were at least no enemies to naturalistic studies.

It implies more than this. It is evident that the school of Cambridge theologians were in active sympathy with all that was really progressive and liberal in the scientific spirit of the time—that they had given a cordial welcome to the aspirations of the experimental philosophy and the new study of nature which had begun to inspire many, and impart a new life and reality to their thoughts. They were so far in hearty affinity with this and all other forward tendencies of the time, although their own speculative impulse came from a different quarter and followed a different method.

When we turn to their own writings, there is no difficulty in determining the main source of their speculative inspiration. As a philosophical school they were formed by the study of the Platonic writings; the writings, that is to say, not only of Plato himself, but of those Alexandrine teachers who followed out in a theological direction the Platonic course of thought. This was the positive influence which, more than any other, moulded the minds of all the men we have mentioned, and gave consistency and character, as it has given a name, to their speculative position. They brought the Church back to "her old loving nurse the Platonick philosophy,"[1] and sought to raise the level of her thought again to that region of higher ideas in which she had once delighted to dwell. Within the bosom of Protestantism they kindled for the first time the love of this nobler speculation, and endeavoured to carry up its dogmatic problems into an atmosphere of rational

[1] A Brief Account of the New Sect, &c.

thinking which should explain and verify them. Platonists by nature, they were drawn to the study of "Plato and his scholars above others."[1] To the great classics of idealism they abandoned themselves with an enthusiasm which tinctures all their writings, and the constant outbreak of which, while it colours and emphasises their style, also sometimes oppresses the freedom and mars the strength of their own thoughts.

This Platonic revival was highly important for the interests of philosophy in England in the seventeenth century. It not only deepened in many minds the superficial tendencies of the Baconian system, and served to link together for them the spheres of spiritual law and material fact; but it evoked the only force adequate to meet the development of naturalism in a direction which threatened the distinctive principles of religion and the Church. Bacon had made natural science the basis of all other science. All real knowledge or philosophy, according to him, came from the investigation and classification of outward facts. Hobbes took up the method and applied it to the study, not of nature, but of society and the whole moral and spiritual order in which man finds himself here. He sought the basis of this order in certain obvious facts of human nature, and built up an elaborate hypothesis of social and political morality on the analysis and co-ordination of these facts. The hypothesis was one directly in the face of the Cambridge movement of thought, and it served to call forth all the energies

[1] Corr. between Tuckney and Whichcote, p. 38.

of the movement and give decision to them. While Platonism, then, may be said to have originated the movement, Hobbism was the means of concentrating its thought and giving dogmatic direction to it. While the one was the positive the other was the negative influence which formed the school.

It had been the aim of the higher thought of the century to depreciate the principle of mere arbitrary rule both in politics and religion—to carry men's minds away from traditional canons and dogmas to the true sphere of authority in reason and conscience. The movement had been in search of some rational principle of certitude amidst the decay of ancient systems and of mere institutional and personal safeguards. It remained for the great genius of Hobbes to try and arrest this progress, and reinstate on a philosophic basis the principle of arbitrary authority. To this task he brought rare powers and the most independent spirit of speculation. For Hobbes was a genuine child of his age in everything save the conclusions of his philosophy. He was a radical in the service of reaction. His mind was revolutionary in its vigour and directness, its hardihood and self-assertion, its freedom from pedantry, and contempt for the wisdom of the ancients. There is no one of all the thinkers of the century who has dealt to the old scholasticism such hearty and fatal blows. His clear and subtle, if sometimes coarse analysis, may be said to have laid the foundation of psychological science which has been so fruitful since his day; and to his organising conception political philosophy owes its creation, whatever we may think of the

character of the creation in his hands. But behind all his great gifts there was no spiritual insight—no eye for any truths deeper than those of the sense or the intellect. Not only had he no appreciation of such truths, but apparently he had no perception of their existence. He was honestly ignorant of them. In the compass of his own keen and powerful mind he found no trace of them. Accordingly he judged human nature and human society as if they were not. All that he saw he saw with a rare clearness; but there was a side of human life which he did not see at all—to which he turned an eye wholly blind. So it was that the civil and religious distractions of his age presented to him nothing but their obvious aspect of quarrelsomeness and misery. He detected nothing of the deeper spiritual and political influences which were moving the age, and amidst all its confusion moving it towards a higher organisation both of religious and civil wellbeing,—nothing of the underlying moral forces which were painfully growing into a better order—a higher form of commonwealth. There were to him no such moral forces. "Nothing," he says, "is in itself either bad or good, ugly or beautiful." Everything gets its quality from without, and is stamped by external authority. As words are merely the counters of wise men,[1] so actions are in themselves entirely indifferent. They get all their value or meaning from a sanction outside of them. Moral duties have their elementary basis in human nature, but they derive all their social or organic effect from

[1] Leviathan, i. 4.

the supreme political power. In this sense, if not primarily and absolutely, morality is the creature of the State. So also is religion, which has a natural foundation in human fear, but the truths of which can only be defined and guaranteed by the supreme authority "residing in the sovereign, who only has the legislative power."[1]

It was impossible, in fact, for Hobbes, starting as he did from a mere external view of human nature, as a collection of selfish instincts at necessary war with one another, to find any regulative principle within,—any law of the mind which could subdue the lower conflict of the passions. There was to him no sphere of human nature corresponding to "the law of the mind;" and the principle of control, therefore, must come from without and not from within. Similarly he could find no rallying-point for human society save in external law, backed by a supreme power capable of enforcing it. This was to him at once the highest ethical and the highest political conception; and within the control of this sovereign power, whose verdicts admitted of no challenge and no division, he sought to reduce all the movements of life, of society, and the Church. Never were nobler powers consecrated to lower service. Never was a bolder attempt made to contradict the very idea of moral progress and of rational liberty in religion, and to enthrone in their stead a gigantic naturalism which might conserve society, but only at the expense of the nobler aspirations, for the excitement and development

[1] Leviathan, iii. 33.

of which society is to be valued. The essentially unchristian character of Hobbes's speculations shines through all the disguise of Scriptural language and the framework of Biblical conceptions which he delights to employ. He is not the more, but the less, a Christian for all his parade of Christian phraseology. His professions of respect for supernaturalism, and his descriptive analysis of a Christian commonwealth, may be honest or not. This does not alter the essential character of his thought, which leaves no rational basis in human nature for either morality or religion.

A system such as this was in every respect antagonistic to the Platonic School at Cambridge. They had no doubts from the first of its meaning. They saw in it a living and formidable opponent to their most cherished convictions. They disliked both its political and speculative spirit, and armed themselves to encounter it. Even before the publication of the 'Leviathan,' in 1651, when the first sketch of the Hobbian philosophy had only been privately printed at Paris and circulated,[1] Cudworth would seem to have discerned its purport, and entered the lists against it in the Theses which he delivered for his degree of B.D. at Cambridge in 1644.[2] The great labours of his life were more or less directed by the same antagonism. Everywhere the principles

[1] Elementa Philosophica de Cive, 1642.

[2] This, at least, is probable. See subsequent page. The title of the Theses are significant: I. "Dantur boni et mali rationes æternæ et indispensabiles." II. "Dantur substantiæ incorporeæ suâ naturâ immortales."—Birch's Account of Life and Writings of Cudworth.

of the 'Leviathan' crop out in the line of his thought; and they influence no less conspicuously the argumentation of his colleague, Henry More. Both writers are only to be understood in the light of Hobbes's theories. The Platonic background of their speculations only comes into full prominence against the atomistic materialism, which they believed it to be the essential aim of his writings to propagate. It was the special merit of the school that they were able to meet this materialistic tendency, not merely, as some others,[1] by polemical criticism and clever exposure, but by a well-ordered scheme of thought, whose principles had been already worked into unison with Christian philosophy. This was the glory of the school; it was also its weakness. It gave a systematic and elaborate plan to their arguments; but it tempted them, also, not infrequently, to substitute mere learning for reasoning, and to call in ancient verdicts instead of working out difficulties by their own enkindled and living thoughtfulness. As mere writers, the Cambridge men were less original and advanced than Hobbes. They served the cause of progress, but with weapons of less novelty and precision than those with which he opposed it. Their meaning was infinitely higher; their form by no means so perfect. While they led the cause of rational liberty and independent speculation in the highest subjects, they remained fettered by a literary traditionalism and bondage to the mere verbalism of ancient

[1] Such as Clarendon and others. Clarendon wrote in his exile 'A Survey of the "Leviathan,"' and dedicated it to Charles II.

opinion, which greatly impaired the value of their labours, and have given them a far less living influence than they deserved in the history of opinion.

There are but few contemporary notices of the Cambridge Latitudinarians, and such as they are they do not greatly help us to a full or enlightened conception of their position and objects. Burnet alludes to them in a well-known passage, characterising them, after his manner, in a few graphic touches; but he does not give any detailed description of their relation to the parties of the time. The passage, though well known, is too significant to be omitted. Speaking generally of the clergy of the Restoration, he says that "They generally took more care of themselves than of the Church. The men of merit and service were loaded with many livings and many dignities. With this great accession of wealth, there broke in upon the Church a great deal of luxury and high living on the pretence of hospitality; while others made purchases, and left great estates, most of which we have seen melt away. And with this overset of wealth and pomp that came on men in the decline of their parts and age, they, who were now growing into old age, became lazy and negligent in all the true concerns of the Church; they left preaching and writing to others, while they gave themselves up to ease and sloth. In all which sad representation some few exceptions are to be made; but so few, that if a new set of men had not appeared of another stamp, the

Church had quite lost her esteem over the nation. These were generally of Cambridge, formed under some divines, the chief of whom were Drs Whichcot, Cudworth, Wilkins, More, and Worthington. Whichcot was a man of a rare temper, very mild and obliging. He had great credit with some that had been eminent in the late times; but made all the use he could of it to protect good men of all persuasions. He was much for liberty of conscience; and being disgusted with the dry systematical way of those times, he studied to raise those who conversed with him to a nobler set of thoughts, and to consider religion as a seed of a deiform nature (to use one of his own phrases). In order to this, he set young students much on reading the ancient philosophers, chiefly Plato, Tully, and Plotin, and on considering the Christian religion as a doctrine sent from God, both to elevate and sweeten human nature, in which he was a great example, as well as a wise and kind instructor. Cudworth carried this on with a great strength of genius and a vast compass of learning. He was a man of great conduct and prudence; upon which his enemies did very falsely accuse him of craft and dissimulation. Wilkins was of Oxford, but removed to Cambridge. His first rise was in the Elector-Palatine's family, when he was in England. Afterwards he married Cromwell's sister; but made no other use of that alliance but to do good offices, and to cover the university from the sourness of Owen and Goodwin. At Cambridge he joined with those who studied to propagate better thoughts, to take men off from

being in parties, or from narrow notions, from superstitious conceits, and a fierceness about opinions. He was also a great observer and promoter of experimental philosophy, which was then a new thing, and much looked after. He was naturally ambitious, but was the wisest clergyman I ever knew. He was a lover of mankind, and had a delight in doing good. More was an open-hearted and sincere Christian philosopher, who studied to establish men in the great principles of religion against atheism, that was then beginning to gain ground, chiefly by reason of the hypocrisy of some, and the fantastical conceits of the more sincere enthusiasts."

Interposing a brief description of the philosophy of Hobbes, he proceeds: "He" (Hobbes) "thought interest and fear were the chief principles of society; and he put all morality in the following that which was our own private will or advantage. He thought religion had no other foundation than the laws of the land. And he put all the law in the will of the prince or of the people; for he writ his book at first in favour of absolute monarchy, but turned it afterwards to gratify the republican party. These were his true principles, though he had disguised them for deceiving unwary readers. And this set of motions came to spread much. The novelty and boldness of them set many on reading them. The impiety of them was acceptable to men of corrupt minds, which were but too much prepared to receive them by the extravagances of the late times. So this set of men at Cambridge studied to assert and examine the

principles of religion and morality on clear grounds, and in a philosophical method. In this way More led the way to many that came after him. Worthington was a man of eminent piety and great humility, and practised a most sublime way of self-denial and devotion. All these, and those who were formed under them, studied to examine further into the nature of things than had been done formerly. They declared against superstition on the one hand and enthusiasm on the other. They loved the constitution of the Church, and the liturgy, and could well live under them ; but they did not think it unlawful to live under another form. They wished that things might have been carried with more moderation. And they continued to keep a good correspondence with those who had differed from them in opinion, and allowed a great freedom both in philosophy and in divinity ; from whence they were called men of latitude. And upon this, men of narrower thoughts and fiercer tempers fastened upon them the name of Latitudinarians. They read Episcopius much. And the making out the reasons of things being a main part of their studies, their enemies called them Socinians. They were all very zealous against Popery. And so, they becoming soon very considerable, the Papists set themselves against them to decry them as atheists, deists, or at best Socinians." [1]

In addition to Burnet, there are two contemporary writers who give us a general description of the Cambridge Platonists or Latitudinarians—S. P. of

[1] Burnet's History of his own Times, i. 339-342.

Cambridge, to whose pamphlet we have already alluded, and Edward Fowler, who was subsequently Bishop of Gloucester. Fowler's publication is entitled, 'Principles and Practices of certain Moderate Divines of the Church of England, abusively called Latitudinarians, &c., in a Free Discourse between Two Intimate Friends.' The 'Free Discourse' was published anonymously, probably in 1670; the second edition bears the date of 1671; but it is well understood to have been the production of Fowler, who is somewhat better known as the author of a treatise on 'The Design of Christianity,' by which he sought to follow up the reasoning of the 'Discourse,' and the spirit and principles of which were vigorously attacked by Bunyan. Fowler is a clever and ingenious writer, not without some degree of thoughtfulness; but his sketch of the opinions he so much admires is very desultory, with a constant tendency to run into tedious and aimless discussion. We can gather, however, from his description, general as it is, and from the pamphlet of S. P., certain features which it may be worth selecting and setting before the reader.[1]

[1] There is also a pamphlet by Samuel Parker, A.M. (afterwards Bishop of Oxford), entitled 'A Free and Impartial Censure of the Platonick Philosophie' (1665.) Parker we have already encountered as Hales's critic; and it is probable that he may have intended in his general criticism of the Platonic philosophy an indirect censure of the Cambridge school, with whose tendencies he had plainly no affinity. His pamphlet, however, contains no direct allusions to the school, and its somewhat abstract polemics barely touch it. If somewhat free and coarse in its handling, Parker's pamphlet is yet written with clearness, point, and vigour, and is, in brief, a very fair defence of Baconian or inductive philosophy against Platonic or other idealism.

Both writers witness strongly to the recognised position of the Cambridge divines, as a distinct school of religious thought in the decade following the Restoration. In this respect they were objects of popular criticism — everywhere spoken about with the ignorant and vague apprehension with which new movements are apt to be regarded by the vulgar: "I can come into no company of late," says the Oxford correspondent of S. P., "but I find the chief discourse to be about a certain new sect of men called Latitude-men; but though the name be in every man's mouth, yet the explicit meaning of it, or the heresy which they hold, or the individual persons that are of it, are as unknown (for aught I can learn) as the order of the Rosicrucians. On the one side I hear them represented as a party very dangerous to the King and Church, as seeking to undermine them both; on the other side I cannot hear what their particular opinions or practices are that bear any such dangerous aspect." "The name of Latitude-men," S. P. admits in reply, "is daily exagitated amongst us, both in taverns and pulpits, and very tragical representations made of them. A Latitude-man, therefore (according to the best definition I can collect), is an image of Clouts, that men set up to encounter with for want of a real enemy; it is a convenient name to reproach a man that you owe a spite to; 'tis what you will, and you may affix it upon whom you will; 'tis something will serve to talk of, when all other discourse fails."

In the 'Discourse' our divines appear much in the same light: "I have often observed," says one

of the "two intimate friends" who carry on the dialogue, "that the fierce men (as much at odds as they are among themselves) can too well agree in heaping calumnies on these gentlemen, and in giving them the worst of characters. I have heard them represented as a generation of people that have revived the abominable principles of the old Gnosticks; as a company of men that are prepared for the embracing of any religion, and to renounce or subscribe to any doctrine, rather than incur the hazard of persecution; and that they esteem him the only heretick that refuseth to be of that religion the King or State professeth; or at least the most dangerous heretick, that suffering is to be preferred before sinning. They are characterised as people whose only religion it is to temporise, and transform themselves into any shape for their secular interests; and that judge no doctrine so saving as that which obligeth to so complying and condescending a humour, as to become all things to all men, that so by any means they may gain something; as I heard one once jear a most worthy person, as he thought, no doubt, very wittily."

Again, says one of the friends: "Have you not heard the cholerick gentlemen distinguish these persons by a long nickname, which they have taught their tongues to pronounce as roundly as if it were shorter than it is by four or five syllables?" "Yes," is the reply, "oftener, I presume, than you have; for though we are both countrymen, and wonted more than most to a solitary life, yet my occasions call me abroad, and into varieties of companies, more fre-

quently than yours do you; where I hear, ever and anon, the word of a foot and half long sounded out with a great grace, and that not only at fires and tables, but sometimes from pulpits too. Nay, and it accompanied good store of other bumbasts, and little witticisms, in seasoning, not long since, the stately Oxonian theatre."

The general position of the Cambridge Platonists is sufficiently evident from these remarks. They enjoyed the vague repute of thinkers in a frivolous and ignorant age. They were misunderstood alike by the fanatics of the Church and of Nonconformity. To both they were objects of dislike, and yet, in some degree, of fear. To the rising generation, half-fanatical and half-epicurean — the generation which gave ten pounds for the 'Paradise Lost,' and left its author to die in obscurity and poverty—they seem mainly to have been objects of ridicule. The character of the age may be judged from the character of its jokes. It seemed to it a piece of humour to speak of a Latitudinarian as "a *gentleman of a wide swallow.*"[1]

We do not learn anything very definite from the 'Discourse,' any more than from the tractate of S. P., as to the philosophical principles of the Cambridge divines, beyond the fact that they set themselves with zeal to oppose the Hobbian philosophy, which is described by the author of the 'Discourse' as consisting in such doctrines as the following—viz.: "That all moral righteousness is founded in the law of the civil magistrate; that the Holy Scriptures are

[1] Free Discourse, p. 10.

obliging by vertue onely of a civil sanction; that whatsoever magistrates command, their subjects are bound to submit to, notwithstanding contrary to divine moral laws." Had they taught such doctrines, the author of the 'Discourse' argues, they might have deserved the censures which so many lavished upon them; but, on the contrary, he says, such "accursed principles (for I can give them no better epithet) were never more solidly confuted than by these men."

Both writers speak with more distinctness and detail of the ecclesiastical and theological position of our divines. S. P. particularly vindicates their honest and devout attachment to the Church of England, and their high approval of its "virtuous mediocrity," as distinguished alike from "the meretricious gaudiness of the Church of Rome, and the squalid sluttery of fanatic conventicles." They were earnestly in favour of a liturgy, and preferred that of the Church of England to all others, "admiring the solemnity, gravity, and primitive simplicity of it, its freedom from affected phrases, or mixture of vain and doubtful opinions." In a word, they thought it so good, that they were "loth to adventure the mending of it, for fear of marring it." In like manner, they are said to have had "a deep veneration" for the government of the Anglican Church, which they esteemed to be at once the best in itself and the most conformable to the apostolic times.

"They did always abhor," continues S. P., "both the usurpation of Scottish Presbytery and the confusion of Independent anarchy; and do esteem it one

of the methods which the Prince of Darkness useth to overthrow the Church and religion, by bringing the clergy into contempt, which experience tells us will necessarily follow upon the removing the several dignities and pre-eminence among them; for when the bishops are once levelled with ordinary presbyters, the presbyters will soon be trampled on by the meanest of the laity; and when every preacher would needs be a bishop, every rustic and mechanic took upon him to be a preacher."

Fowler does not emphasise so much their attachment to the Anglican form of Church government, but he says that they greatly preferred Episcopacy, esteeming it to be in its *essentials* the best type of Church government, as well as that which is found prevailing "presently after the apostles' times." He identifies their views with the rational and moderate opinions of Chillingworth in his well-known statement on the subject.

As to their theological views, both writers dwell upon the hearty subscription which the Cambridge divines gave to the Thirty-nine Articles. "Nor is there any article of doctrine," continues S. P., "held by the Church which they can justly be accused to depart from, unless absolute reprobation be one, which they do not think themselves bound to believe." Heartily, however, as they are said to subscribe to the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church, it is expressly stated by the author of the 'Discourse,' that in doing so they took "that liberty in the interpretation of them that is allowed by the Church herself." Subscription was held merely to imply the

acceptance of the Articles as "instruments of peace;" and in favour of this view Fowler quotes the authority of Archbishop Usher. The most significant passage cited by him is the following, from Usher's 'Schism Guarded:' "We do not suffer any man to reject the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England at his pleasure; yet neither do we look upon them as essentials of saving faith, or legacies of Christ and his apostles; but in a mean, as pious opinions fitted for the preservation of unity: neither do we oblige any man to *believe* them, but only not to *contradict* them." This was plainly the principle on which the Cambridge divines adhered to the doctrines of the Church of England—a principle which they believed to be embodied in its constitution, and of the highest value in itself. They were characteristically *rational* theologians. They sought to bring every truth or doctrine to the test of the Christian reason, and to estimate it by a moral standard—in other words, by its tendency to exalt or degrade our conceptions of the divine.[1] It was absurd, argues S. P., to accuse them "of hearkening too much to their own reason." "For reason," he adds, "is that faculty whereby a man must judge of everything; nor can a man believe anything except he have some reason for it, whether that reason be a deduction from the light of nature, and those principles which are the candle of the Lord, set up in the soul of every man that hath not wilfully extinguished it; or a branch of divine revelation in the oracles of Holy Scripture; or the general interpretation of genuine

[1] Discourse, p. 192.

antiquity, or the proposal of our own Church consentaneous thereto; or, lastly, the result of some or all of these; for he that will rightly make use of his reason, must take all that is reasonable into consideration. And it is admirable to consider how the same conclusions do naturally flow from all these several principles. . . . Nor is there any point in divinity where that which is most ancient doth not prove the most rational, and the most rational the ancientest; for there is an eternal consanguinity between all verity; and nothing is true in divinity which is false in philosophy, or on the contrary; and therefore what God hath joined together, let no man put asunder."

The author of the 'Discourse' ventures more definitely to define their theological position as "a middle one betwixt the Calvinists and Remonstrants." On the one hand, he says, they maintained "that there is such a thing as distinguishing grace, whereby some persons are absolutely elected, by virtue whereof they shall be (having potent and infallible means prepared for them) irresistibly saved." But, on the other hand, they hold "that others not of the number of this special elect, are not at all in a desperate condition, but have sufficient means appointed for them to qualifie them for greater or less of happiness, and have sufficient grace offered to them some way or other, and some time or other, and are in a capacity of salvation either greater or less through the mercies of Jesus Christ; and that none of them are damned but those that wilfully refuse to cooperate with that grace of God, and will not act in

some moral suitableness to that power they have received." This *medium* theology appeared to Fowler to present all the advantages of Calvinism, without any of the disadvantages of Arminianism. It embraced at once an absolute decree and a universal salvability. "Whatsoever good Arminianism pretends to concerning all men, is exhibited to the part not absolutely elected; and to the other part the goodness of God is greater than is allotted by Arminius: and whatsoever good is pretended in Calvinism to that part that is absolutely elected, the same goodness is here exhibited; and besides that direful vizard pulled off, that ignorance and melancholy had put upon Divine Providence and the lovely face of the Gospel."

He is at a loss to conceive why either Calvinist or Remonstrant should "mislike" so comprehensive and beautiful a system! He can only account for this by an obstinate idea on their part that there cannot be any improvements in theology. But to such an idea he himself strongly objects. "Every age, sure enough," he says, "improveth in knowledge, having the help still of those foregoing: and as this is seen in other sciences, so especially is it discernible in that of divinity, as all but ignorant and extremely prejudiced persons must needs acknowledge."

Such are the main features of interest to be gathered from the contemporary notices of the Cambridge divines which have come down to us. They are neither very copious nor very intelligent. They do not penetrate much below the surface, nor help us to

get close to the heart or higher meaning of the movement. But, so far, they are lively, interesting, and characteristic; and if they do not go deep, they suggest a clear enough surface-picture. It is seldom, perhaps, that the highest side of any religious movement is presented to contemporary on-lookers and critics; but even the hasty impressions of contemporaries are always well worthy the attention of the historian. They serve to give life and reality to the aspects of a movement, even where they fail to recognise all its meaning, or to describe it in its fulness.

II.

BENJAMIN WHICHCOTE—REASON AND RELIGION.

THE name of Whichcote is barely known in the history of English theology. Burnet's notice[1] is quoted occasionally; but beyond this, little is understood either of the character or writings of one who was among the most influential preachers and theologians of his age—an age in which both preaching and theology still exercised a real influence on all the affairs of national life. Whichcote not only possessed great credit with the most eminent statesmen of the Commonwealth,[2] but he was probably, during this important period, the teacher who, more than any other at Cambridge, impressed his own mode of thought both upon his colleagues in the university and the rising generation of students. Tillotson, Patrick, and Burnet all look back to him as a truly memorable man, whose whole life and studies were devoted to the most elevating objects, and who set the thoughts of the young in a new and higher direction. In a true sense he may be said to have founded the new school of philosophical theology, although it is chiefly known by the more elaborate writings of others. Like many eminent teachers, his

[1] Hist. of his own Times, i. 339, 340. [2] Ibid.

personality and the general force of his mental character were obviously greater than his intellectual productiveness. A few volumes of sermons are nearly all that survive of his labours to help us to understand them. Yet his sermons, comparatively neglected as they have been, are amongst the most thoughtful in the English language, pregnant with meaning, not only for his own, but for all time. It is strange that he should have been so little known and studied; but the obscurity which has overtaken him is not without some relation to his very greatness, and the silent way in which he passed out of sight at the Restoration after he had done his work at Cambridge. There are some kinds of influence which perish in their very fruitfulness, as the seed dies and wastes away at the root of the ripening grain. Whichcote's influence was of this kind. He was careless of his own name, providing the higher thoughts for which he cared were found bearing fruit. He possessed that highest magnanimity of all—a magnanimity extremely rare—of forgetting himself in the cause which he loved, and rejoicing that others entered into the results for which he laboured. It is all the more necessary, therefore, that we should endeavour to do some degree of justice to his name and opinions—to bring before us as complete an image as we can of the man, and of his academic and theological activity. Standing as he does at the fountain-head of our school of thinkers, it is especially important to catch the spirit of his teaching, and to present it in its full historical and intellectual relations.

Benjamin Whichcote was born of "an ancient and

honourable family" in the county of Shropshire in the spring of 1609-10. The exact date of his birth is given as March 11. His father was apparently a country squire, the owner of Whichcote Hall. His mother was of the same rank of life, being the "daughter of Edward Fox, Esq. of Greet, in the same county."[1] He was sent to Emmanuel College, Cambridge, in 1626. Of his previous life, or the training of his boyhood, we know nothing. His tutor at Emmanuel was Mr Antony Tuckney, the correspondent of his later years, of whom we shall learn more immediately. Tuckney was about ten years older than himself, and had passed a very distinguished academic career. He had been chosen fellow of his college when only twenty years of age, and after a brief interval of residence in a noble family, had returned to Cambridge, and acquired special distinction as a tutor at Emmanuel. This well-known college owed its foundation to Sir Walter Mildmay, in the reign of Elizabeth (1584), and was designed for the special encouragement of Calvinistic theology. Sir Walter was Elizabeth's Chancellor of the Exchequer for a lengthened period (from 1566 to 1589). He is described by Fuller as a statesman of rare integrity, zealous "to advance the Queen's

[1] Preface by Dr Salter, Prebendary of Norwich, to Whichcote and Tuckney's 'Correspondence,' published in 1753. To this preface and to Whichcote's own letters, and, of course, Tillotson's and Burnet's notices, we are indebted for the facts of his life and the course of formation of his opinions. Tillotson preached Whichcote's funeral sermon in 1683. I do not know of any other sources of information beyond the biographical dictionaries. There is a story as to Whichcote's MSS., and how they came into Dr Salter's hands, which will be told in the sequel.

treasure," and yet "conscionably without wronging the subject," as a man of learning and deep and earnest convictions. Sympathising with the more decided Protestantism of the time, on which his mistress looked coldly, he devoted his means to its encouragement. The conversation betwixt the Queen and him on the subject related by Fuller is in all respects creditable to the Chancellor—to his wise tact no less than to his zeal. The Queen is said to have addressed him one day, "Sir Walter, I hear you have erected a Puritan foundation." "No, madam," was his reply, "far be it from me to countenance anything contrary to your established laws; but I have set an *acorn* which, when it becomes an *oak*, God alone knows what will be the fruit thereof." [1]

Whichcote took his degree of B.A. in 1629, and of M.A. in 1633, and in the latter year became fellow of his college. In 1636 he was ordained both deacon and priest by Williams, Bishop of Lincoln, an irregularity for which his biographer [2] is unable to account. During the eventful years which followed, he appears to have busied himself with pupils at the university till 1643, when he was presented by his college to the living of North Cadbury, in Somersetshire. There he is supposed to have married and begun to settle himself, when in the following year he was recalled to Cambridge to succeed Dr Collins, who had been ejected by the Parliament from the provostship of King's College. It appears to have

[1] Hist. of University of Cambridge, 1655, p. 146, 147.

[2] Dr Salter, Prebendary of Norwich, who edited his 'Aphorisms,' 1753.

been a grave perplexity to Whichcote whether or not he should accept this preferment. The idea of superseding a man whom he greatly respected, and whom he must have held to be wrongfully deprived of his office, was distasteful to his mind. He weighed anxiously the whole business, and the reasons for and against it, and even drew them out in writing for his guidance; but at length consented to accept the office, under condition of continuing to Dr Collins one half of the salary payable to the provost from the college revenues.[1] He acted wisely; but the step was one which he was not allowed to forget at the Restoration, and even Tillotson remembers it apologetically in his funeral sermon. Tillotson adds at the same time that Whichcote "did not stoop to do anything unworthy to obtain the place, for he never took the Covenant." Not only so, but by the friendship and interest he had with some of the chief visitors, "he prevailed to have the greatest part of the fellows of King's College exempted from that imposition, and preserved them in their places."

It may be inferred from this promotion, as also from his training at Emmanuel College, that Whichcote had grown up amongst Puritans, and that his relatives and friends belonged to that party. Whether he himself had ever professed Puritan tenets it is impossible to say. In his early years he probably fell in with the tone of his college. Nor is there any reason to believe that up to this time he had

[1] Salter, Biographical Preface, p. xviii. A schedule giving the heads of such reasons, *pro* and *con*, was found amongst his papers after his death.

attracted notice by any singularity of opinion. In his first letter to Tuckney, in 1651, he says,—"I do not, I cannot, forget my four first years' education in the university under you; and I think I have principles by me I then received from you."[1] In the same letter, however, he also indicates that some of the opinions to which Tuckney objected had been long entertained by him; so long back as when he disputed in the college chapel.[2] The fact appears to be that Whichcote was from the first a thoughtful and independent student in religious matters. Whatever may have been his early associations or upbringing, his mind sought its own path. He was but little indebted to books, he distinctly asserts, when accused by Tuckney of borrowing his views from the Dutch Arminians, and other special sources. "You say you find me largely in their 'Apologia;'—to my knowledge I never saw nor heard of the book before"[3]—a singular enough confession. "I shame myself to tell you how little I have been acquainted with books. While fellow of Emmanuel College, employment with pupils took my time from me. I have not read many books; but I have studied a few. *Meditation and invention hath been rather my life than reading.*"[4] Slowly forming his opinions in this manner, and carefully testing them, rejecting whatever was not "underpropt by convincing reason or satisfactory Scripture," he would not be ready to break the ties of circumstance which bound him. The most thought-

[1] Letters, p. 7.
[2] Ibid., p. 12.
[3] Ibid., p. 53.
[4] Ibid., p. 54.

ful and meditative minds are often the most reluctant to separate from old associations and surroundings. Hales remained strongly attached to the High Church side in the civil struggle, and Chillingworth also, long after they had unlearned every dogmatic principle on which High Churchism rests. And Whichcote doubtless remained among the Puritans, and was reckoned on their side from similar accidents of personal connection and training, although he never imbibed their spirit, and seems from the first to have rejected their doctrinal narrowness. The quick eye of Tuckney had seen the growing independence of his pupil, and his tendency to freedom and originality. "I loved you," he says,[1] in allusion to their early connection at Emmanuel, "as finding you then studious and pious, and very loving and observant of me;" but "I remember I then thought you somewhat cloudy and obscure in your expressions." The mind of the pupil, notwithstanding his affectionate respect for his teacher, was evidently, even in these years, on a different track. He seems to have taken a larger and more philosophic view of religious questions, and given them different turns of expression. And dogmatic Puritanism has always been jealous of new modes of expression. It tolerates fundamental opposition almost as readily as phraseological differences. "Cloudiness and obscurity" are to this day the favourite terms by which it designates all attempts to freshen or remould the language of theology.

The date of Whichcote's appointment as Provost

[1] Ibid., p. 56.

of King's, 1644, may be said to mark the rise of the new philosophical and religious movement at Cambridge. Not for some while after this, indeed, did it attain significance and general intellectual interest. But from the time that he was placed in this position of authority, Whichcote seems to have become a power in the university, and gradually it was felt that there was a new life, other than Puritan or Anglo-Catholic, moving the academic mind. "A nobler, freer, and more generous set of opinions," began to prevail, especially among the young Masters of Art, to the no small alarm of the older authorities, who remained fixed in their dogmatic opinions. The chief instrument of this new movement, as of the older religious spirit which had so stirred and changed the country, was preaching. It was as Afternoon Lecturer in Trinity Church that Whichcote spread his views and kindled that fervour for a rational Christianity which was destined to have such enduring effects. The correspondence with Tuckney[1] helps us in some degree to understand the growth of the movement. We could have wished further information ; but at least we can trace in these letters the diverse forces at work, and the odd mingling of personal and theological influences with the deeper currents of thought, which were to leave their impression upon the mind of future generations.

The aim of the Puritan authorities in 1644 was, of course, to promote the cause so dear to them, and

[1] This correspondence, as will be afterwards explained, was first published in 1753, edited by Dr Salter, Prebendary of Norwich.

to remodel the universities after their own mind. Whichcote's appointment to be Provost of King's was only one of numerous appointments which they made at the time with the same intention; and his position, and the movement which he initiated, will be best understood in relation to the men who surrounded him, and with whom it was no doubt expected he would cordially co-operate. There are three names especially associated with his own: Tuckney, formerly his tutor, who was made Master of Emmanuel; and Arrowsmith and Hill, who were placed respectively at the head of St John's and of Trinity. "Thus," says Dr Salter, "four very intimate friends, after a separation of some years, save that the three last met in the Assembly of Divines at Westminster, saw each other again in the several most honourable stations of the university to which their learning and piety had deservedly recommended them."

Tuckney, the oldest of the four, had already acquired distinction as a tutor at Emmanuel, where he had "many persons of rank and quality admitted under him." He was "a man of great reading and much knowledge, a ready and elegant Latinist, but narrow, stiff, and dogmatical; no enemy to the royal or episcopal power as it should seem; but above measure zealous for Church power and ecclesiastical discipline."[1] He was, in short, a doctrinal Puritan, as his letters fully show, of a somewhat extreme type, equally opposed to Papists, Arminians, and Independents, all of whom he

[1] Dr Salter's Preface, p. xii.

attacks vigorously "in the same breath." Some idea of his dogmatic fierceness may be gathered from his strong denunciation of Milton on the subject of divorce, whom he calls *infamis et non uno laqueo dignus.* He is said to have taken an active part in the dogmatic work of the Westminster Assembly of Divines, and "particularly to have drawn the exposition of the Commandments in the larger Catechism."[1] Of his ability there seems no question, as he was unanimously chosen—*invito et pœne coactus*, he himself says—to fill the chair of Regius Professor of Divinity on the resignation of Arrowsmith in 1655. While stoutly dogmatical in his own views, he seems to have been by no means a bigot practically. He voted in the Assembly "against subserving or swearing to the Confession." And in his elections at St John's, to which he was promoted from Emmanuel, "when the President, according to the cant of the times, would call upon him to have regard to the godly," he would answer, "no one should have a greater regard to the godly than himself; but he was determined to choose none but *scholars*—adding very wisely, they may deceive me in their godliness, they cannot in their scholarship." "This story of him, so much to his honour, is still upon record in the college." So says Dr Salter in 1753; and the story is one eminently characteristic, and deserving of preservation. Tuckney was plainly a man of shrewdness and insight as well as learning and zeal, and no unworthy antagonist of his distinguished

[1] Ibid., p. xv.

pupil. His letters reveal very much the same qualities that Salter describes. They are narrow and deficient in sympathy and elevation, but they are terse, well reasoned, and keep closely to the subject from his own point of view.

Hill was also a student at Emmanuel, where he was admitted in 1618, about the same time as Tuckney. Like him he had worked for some time with the famous Mr John Cotton, "Vicar of Boston, a very zealous Nonconformist," who afterwards emigrated to New England. He "spent some good time with this Puritan worthy," as many other zealous young men of the time seem to have done, "for his further perfecting, and the more happy seasoning of his spirit." He appears to have excelled as a preacher, having been appointed during the sitting of the Westminster Assembly to preach "often before the House of Commons on solemn occasions, as public fast-days, and also chosen one of their morning week-day preachers at the Abbey." On his promotion to the headship of Trinity College he "set up two lectures in the town of Cambridge, one of which he supplied himself altogether, and was much resorted to." "He printed only a few sermons, which are now little known or inquired after;" and at the time of his death, in 1653, "he had made fair progress," says Tuckney, who preached his funeral sermon, "in a learned confutation of the great daring champion of the Arminian errors, whom the abusive wits of the university, with an impudent boldness, would say none there durst adventure upon." The "great daring champion of the Arminian errors" was

John Goodwin, who had dedicated, two years before, his volume entitled 'Redemption Redeemed' to Whichcote, as Vice-Chancellor, along with the other heads of houses at Cambridge.

John Arrowsmith was the only one of the four not educated at Emmanuel. He was "admitted" at St John's College in 1616. Afterwards he was chosen fellow of Catherine Hall, but seems to have retired early from the university, and settled at Lynn in Norfolk, where he continued, "very much esteemed, some ten or twelve years." He preceded Tuckney in the Regius Professorship of Divinity, the duties of which he discharged with ability; but he seems to have been chiefly remembered for his sweet and admirable temper. He was, says Salter,[1] "like his friends Tuckney and Hill, a very learned and able, but a stiff and narrow divine; was, like them, offended with the popularity and credit of Dr Whichcote; for, though they all respected and loved his person, they could none of them bear with his freedom." But Arrowsmith's natural temper was superior to all his prejudices; and he is represented by both sides as a man of a most sweet and engaging disposition. This appears through all the sourness and severity of his opinions in his 'Tactica Sacra,' a book "written in a clear style and with a lively fancy, in which is displayed at once much weakness and stiffness, but withal great reading, and a very amiable candour to the persons and characters of those from whom he found himself obliged to differ." Whichcote speaks of him in his first letter as "a

[1] Preface, p. xxxiii, xxxiv.

later acquaintance" — later, that is to say, than Tuckney and Hill, both of whom had stood in the relation of tutor to him at Emmanuel—"but my friend of choice, a companion of my special delight, whom in my former years I have acquainted with all my heart. I have told him all my thoughts, and I have scarcely ever spoken or thought better of a man, in respect of the sweetness of his spirit and the amiableness of his conversation."[1]

Such were the four friends, "very dear to each other," now in 1644 settled together at Cambridge. Whichcote was younger by about ten years than any of them; and while the others had been consolidating their early principles in the labours and ambitions of the Westminster Assembly, he had been spending his time in comparative quietness and meditation, either at the university or in Somersetshire, where for a short while he held the living given him by his college. His studies had been of a very different nature from theirs; and gradually there had been forming in his mind trains of thought of which they knew nothing, and, as it turned out, were little able to comprehend. We have seen already that Tuckney professed to have early detected in him the budding of new opinions, or, at least, the use of a new language; and in the same passage he says to his former pupil,—"I have heard that when you came to be a lecturer in the college, you in a great measure for the year laid aside other studies, and betook yourself to philosophy and metaphysics, which some think you were then so immersed in that ever since

[1] P. 7.

you have been cast into that mould both in your private discourses and preaching."[1] Still, not even Tuckney could appreciate the divergency of thought and feeling which had been growing up in Whichcote's mind from the Westminster theological standard. To men of the class of the Westminster Divines, in whom the spirit of dogmatic affirmation is strong, and the spirit of speculative insight weak, if not utterly wanting, few things are more difficult to understand than a theological stand-point different from their own, and, indeed, not only different, but incommensurate — stretching widely beyond their doctrinal particularism, and taking it up into a higher synthesis as of little or no account. They are out of their reckoning before the advance of a new line of thought, which overlooks rather than crosses or opposes their favourite dogmas, and starts on a fresh career. On the other hand, a mind like Whichcote's, meditative rather than polemical, speculative rather than dogmatic, does not court notice for its growing light, but adapts itself as far as possible to the theological atmosphere and associations surrounding it. He was far too wise and broad-minded to be intent merely on the assertion of his own views, and not to feel that all changes of opinion which are really worth promoting must be gradual, and spring organically from the natural decay of pre-existing modes of thought.

There is no evidence, therefore, that at first the four divines did not work cordially together, and seem to themselves to be pursuing the same objects.

[1] Letters, p. 36, 37.

But gradually the change in Whichcote made itself felt. The new tone of his preaching began to stir the university mind, and to awaken distrust amongst his colleagues and old friends. How long the fire smouldered before it burst forth we cannot tell; but at length a Commencement Sermon, preached by Whichcote as Vice-Chancellor, in the autumn of 1651, drew from Tuckney, acting evidently not only for himself but also for his friends Hill and Arrowsmith, and probably others, the vigorous remonstrance contained in his first letter. The background of personal feeling is very noticeable in the letters; and the air of the old tutor gives here and there a curious piquancy to the tone of discussion.

Tuckney opens with an allusion to the gossip and discussion which Whichcote's teaching had for some time excited. It had been said that he and his friends dealt "disingenuously" with the Provost of King's in speaking against his opinion without privately remonstrating with him. "Though I do not fancy," he says, "as some others, that affected word *ingenuous;* and I wish the thing itself were not idolised, to the prejudice of *saving grace;* yet, if I must use the word, truly, Sir, I desire to be so *ingenuous* with you, as out of that ancient and still continued love I bear you, to have leave to tell you that my heart hath been much exercised about you; and that especially since your being Vice-Chancellor I have seldom heard you preach, but that something hath been delivered by you, and that so authoritatively, and with the big words—sometimes of 'divinest reason' and some-

times of 'more than mathematical demonstration'—that hath very much grieved me, and I believe others with me; and yesterday as much as any time. I pass by many things in your sermon, and crave leave to note three or four.

"I. Your second position—'That all those things wherein good men differ may not be determined from Scripture; and that it in some places seems to be for the one part, and in some places for the other'—I take to be unsafe and unsound.

"II. Your first advice—'That we would be confined to Scripture words and expressions—in which all parties agree—and not press other forms of words which are from fallible men; and this would be for the peace of Christendom'—I look at as more dangerous, and verily believe that Christ by His blood never intended to purchase such a peace, in which the most orthodox (for that word I must use, though it be nowadays stomached), with Papists, Arians, Socinians, and all the worst of heretiques, must be all put into a bag together; and let them hold and maintain their own, though never so damnable heresies; yet as long as they agree with us in Scripture expressions they must be accorded with.—And yet,

"III. Your second advice gives your *ingenuous* man liberty to propound his own different conceptions; and it may be to brand the contrary opinion with the black mark of 'divinity taught in hell,' which will take away as much peace as the former advice promised to give us. The *libertas prophetandi*, in most that ever pressed it, did *semper aliquid monstri alere;* and when I discerne whose footsteps

appear in these two advices, I am very sorry to see Dr Whichcote, whom I so much love and honour, to tread in them. Of both these advices what ground there was from the text, I leave indifferent men to judge. Sir, your heart I believe was full of them; and that was the reason of that so *importune* pro-pounding of them.

"IV. Your discourse about reconciliation—that it does not operate on God but on us, that *e nobis nascitur*, &c.—is divinity which my heart riseth against. . . . To say that the ground of God's reconciliation is from anything in us, and not from His free grace, freely justifying the ungodly, is to deny one of the fundamental truths of our Gospel that derives from heaven, which I bless God lyeth near to my heart. It is dearer to me than my life; and therefore you will pardon me in this my bolder παῤῥησία and freeness, in which if I have exceeded you will easily impute an oversight to the straytes of an hour, which I had to write this letter—and a copy of it. And, Sir, although your speech and answers the last Commencement were in the judgment of abler men than myself against my Commencement position the former year; and your first yesterday advice directly against my Commencement sermon, and what you delivered yesterday about reconciliation, if I mistake not, flatly against what I have preached for you in Trinity pulpit; yet in holy reverence I call God to witness that all this I have laid aside, nor hath it put any quickness into my pen. But zeal for God's glory and truth, desire that young ones may not be tainted, and that your name

and repute may not be blemished, and that myself with your other friends may not be grieved, but comforted and edified by your ministry, and so may have more encouragement to attend upon it, have been the weights upon my spirit that thus set the wheel agoing."

There is something delightful in the whiff of personal feeling that mingles with Tuckney's orthodox zeal. No doubt he was honestly distressed by Whichcote's opinions; the "footsteps" which appear in them are too marked not to have alarmed a less sensitive Calvinistic conscience. But, moreover, it is plain that he was personally aggrieved. Whichcote's utterances had been "flatly" in contradiction of his own, and this was more than the most tolerant orthodoxy could stand. One who had assisted at the Westminster Assembly, and who had probably given his earliest theological instructions to the intrepid preacher, could not be expected to bear such an interference. The human impatience of contradiction beyond question helps wonderfully at all times the divine sense of orthodoxy.

Whichcote's reply is marked by humility, and yet he keeps to his point with dignity and force. He thanks Tuckney for his "plain dealing," but he feels bound to examine the question betwixt them. He has always had his former tutor "in very high esteem. I have borne you reverence beyond what you do or can imagine, having in me a loving and gentle sense of my first relation to you; and of all men alive, *I have least affected to differ from you*, or to call in question either what you have done, or

said, or thought; but your judgment I have regarded with reverence and respect. I do not, I cannot, forget my four first years' education in the university under you, and I think I have principles by me I then received from you." He then acknowledges that lately he had been sensible "of an abatement of former familiarity and openness." He had attempted "to make a discovery of the matter," but he had been met "with reservedness;" and therefore he had been content that time should "lead into a good understanding." But now he was heartily glad that "the *cordolium*" had been discovered, and he was willing to be reproved if he was really in error. "Blessed be the man, whosoever he be, that confutes that error. I heartily pray that no man may receive an opinion from me, but only abide in the truth." First he defends the *matter* of his Commencement speech, as having been in his mind and duly considered long before Tuckney delivered his speech. "Seven years before," he says—that is, at his very first settling at Cambridge—he had preached the same views "concerning natural light, or the use of reason;" and therefore he had no intention of merely saying anything in opposition to Tuckney. "Indeed," he added, "I took not offence at your question, but was well enough satisfied in your replication and defence of it—thinking, if we differed in some expression, yet we agreed in sense and meaning."

As to his sermon—he explains fully the positions he had maintained, as he finds them written in his notes. He is persuaded that truly all good men substantially agree "in all things saving," and that

there are indeterminate questions, in reference to which Scripture seems to countenance the different views that may be taken of them. All that is "*ultra et citra Scripturam*," he says, must be pronounced fallible. This is to him "the foundation of Protestancy." All who "agree in Scripture forms of words, acknowledging that the meaning of the Holy Ghost in them is true," should "forbear one another, and not impose their own either sense or phrase." All Protestants hold, he maintains, "that *cuilibet Christiano conceditur judicium discretionis*, against the Pope's usurpation of *Judex Infallibilis, visibilis in rebus fidei*." He admits that his heart was full of these truths, for his head had been possessed with them many years, even so long back as when he had disputed in the college chapel at Emmanuel.

On the subject of reconciliation he enters at length, the effect of his explanation being to show that he had no intention of undervaluing the free grace of God, but only sought to bring out the necessity of Christ's work being recognised as not only something *without* us but also *within* us. For reconciliation betwixt God and us is not usually as betwixt parties mutually incensed, where secret enmity may still remain; but real, to the effect of taking away all our enmity and making us godlike. "For God's acts are not false, overly, imperfect; God cannot make a vain show, God being perfectly under the power of goodness cannot denie Himself—because, if He should, He would depart from goodness, which is impossible to God. Therefore *we* must yield—be subdued to the rules of goodness, receiving stamps

and impressions from God, and God cannot be further pleased than when goodness takes place. They therefore deceive and flatter themselves extremely, who think of reconciliation with God by means of a Saviour acting upon God in their behalf, and not also working in or upon them to make them godlike."

In reply, Tuckney sends a lengthened letter, entering into all the points betwixt them. Reciprocating the affection expressed towards him by his old pupil, he yet returns to the concern entertained by himself and others as to the general tone of Whichcote's preaching. They are grieved, he says, significantly, "by a vein of doctrine which runs up and down in many of your discourses, and in those of some others of very great worth, whom we very much honour, *and whom you head*, some think." Taking up once more the Commencement speech, he expresses more fully his dislike of the manner in which the speaker, like so many others lately, had "cried up" reason, and made use of the saying, "the spirit of man is the candle of the Lord, &c.,"—a favourite expression of Whichcote's. This saying, he holds, has no relation to the truths of *supernatural* or evangelical theology; nor is the Protestant principle of private judgment, while true against the Pope's pretended claims, to be held as superior to the rule of Scripture, but in subordination to it. A true believer should have "something above a collier's faith,"[1]—a proverbial phrase

[1] "Fides carbonaria." — The phrase is used also by Whichcote, and by Arrowsmith in his 'Tactica Sacra.'

which seems to have been current amongst the theological disputants of the time. Yet faith is not to be resolved into reason, but held distinct, directed to its proper object, and governed by its proper authority—the divine mind in Scripture.

The question of good men agreeing on fundamentals, in "all things saving," is rediscussed; but without any further light being thrown upon it. Tuckney could of course urge from his point of view that the value of such an agreement depended entirely upon the questions which it included; and it was easy to add with ironical effect, "I believe those fundamental saving things are in some men's judgments but very few." He cannot admit that men "agreeing in Scripture forms of words" really do or can agree to any purpose so long as they hold contradictory assertions. He even goes the length of saying that men's Christianity must be judged by their opinions rather than by their lives; "when heretiques of old and divers of late times have been sober and temperate, *nec sine larva summæ pietatis*,—I think that we should look rather to their doctrines than their persons." [1]

In conclusion, Tuckney makes a fuller confession of all the uneasiness he and others have been under as to Whichcote's mode of preaching—the philosophical rational style which he had introduced in contrast to the "spiritual, plain, powerful ministry" for which Cambridge had been distinguished. "Some are readie to think," he adds, "that your great

[1] P. 27.

authors you steer your course by are Dr Field, Dr Jackson,[1] Dr Hammond—all three very learned men; the middle sufficiently obscure, and both he and the last, I must needs think, too *corrupt*. Whilst you were fellow here, you were cast into the company of very learned and ingenious men; who, I fear, at least some of them, studied other authors more than the Scriptures—and Plato and his scholars above others — in whom, I must needs acknowledge, from the little insight I have into them, I find many excellent and divine expressions: and as we are wont more to listen to and wonder at a parrot speaking a few words than a man that speaks many more and more plainly, and all intelligibly, so whilst we find such gems in such dunghills, where we less expected them, we have been too much drawn away with admiration of them. And hence in part hath runne a vein of doctrine, which divers very able and

[1] Dr Thomas Jackson, who was for some time Vicar of St Nicholas', Newcastle, then President of Corpus Christi College, Oxford, and who died Dean of Peterborough in 1638, is a significant name in the history of English theology. Coleridge classifies him with the latitudinarian divines of the seventeenth century. But he had no connection with the Cambridge school, and cannot be said to have definitely influenced any of its members, notwithstanding Tuckney's statements. There is, at the same time, much of the same mode of thought in Jackson, and his writings are well deserving of attention, especially 'A Treatise on Justifying Faith: from my Studie in Corpus Christi Colledge, April 1615,' and 'A Treatise of the Divine Essence and Attributes, in two parts: from my Study in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, November 20, 1627.'

Field and his valuable work, 'Of the Church' (1606-1610), are comparatively well known. Field is in many respects a liberal Churchman. His definitions of heresy (b. iii. c. 3), and of schism (ibid., c. 5), are not greatly dissimilar from those of Hales and Jeremy Taylor; but he is of an earlier school of thought, and does not seem to have influenced any of our divines.

worthy men—whom from my heart I much honour —are, I fear, too much known by. The power of nature in morals too much advanced. Reason hath too much given to it in the mysteries of faith—a *recta ratio* much talked of, which I cannot tell where to find.—Mind and understanding is all; heart and will little spoken of.—The decrees of God questioned and quarrelled, because, according to our reason, we cannot comprehend how they can stand with His goodness, which, according to your phrase, *He is under the power of*.—Those our philosophers, and other heathens, much fairer candidates for heaven than the Scriptures seem to allow of; and they, in their virtues, preferred before Christians overtaken with weaknesses. — A kind of moral divinity minted, only with a little tincture of Christ added. Nay, a Platonic faith unites to God.—Inherent righteousness so preached, as if not with the prejudice of imputed righteousness, which hath sometimes very unseemly language given it; yet much said of the one, and very little or nothing of the other. This was not Paul's manner of preaching."

We have quoted so far because we could not have, from the Puritan view, a better and in some respects more vivid account of Whichcote's theological position, and the points where it separated from the Westminster standard. We shall afterwards more fully consider this position, but it deserves to be noticed in the mean time how entirely new, or, as would be now said, neological, it is considered by Tuckney. It is not merely special dif-

ferences which he feels to separate him from some of his old friends at Cambridge; but the plane of thought is obviously different in the two cases. The whole view of the nature of religion and of its relation to philosophy and morals is in question betwixt the Platonic party and himself. The Puritan divine sees this, and at the same time is unable to see any good in the forward movement of thought. He feels the theological ground on which he has been long standing failing him, and he has no courage to try the new ground. It offers to him no prospect of security. The old forms of the truth are to him the only possible "truth of God." And therefore, he says in conclusion, he and his friends "cannot desert it, though we are but little able to maintain it." He mourns over the growth of opinions which he cannot share, and which appear to him to have interrupted the good work to which he looked forward with encouragement when he settled at Cambridge. Great as was his hope of help from "the company and assistance of friends whom he so much honoured and loved," so great, on the contrary, has been his "trouble of spirit in such an unhappy disappointment."

It is unnecessary to dwell minutely upon the mere controversial details of the correspondence, save in so far as they bring out real points of theological or personal significance. The course of argument on the several topics used by both writers, has lost much of its interest, and becomes on Whichcote's part here and there very technical. We can see traces in it of that tendency to "school language"

of which Tuckney accuses him[1]—far more so than in his Sermons or Aphorisms. With all Tuckney's narrowness of thought and the occasional slovenliness of his style, there is a homely vigour and expressiveness in his language which compare very well with the more elaborate but less pointed letter-writing of Whichcote.

In his second letter the latter defends at length his views as to the relation of reason to religion. Reason, he maintains, is not merely the source and instrument of natural theology, but, moreover, has a true function in regard to sacred and evangelical theology. The contents of revelation transcend reason, but in no respect contradict it. They lie *in amplitudine et plenitudine objecti non in contradictione rationis.* "*Quicquid recipitur, ad modum recipientis* recipitur—the bucket most filled in the sea yet least contains the ocean."[2] Or, as he elsewhere puts what seems to have been a favourite thought with him, "The ocean can but fill the vessel, which a much less quantity of water can do." Divine truth, by virtue of its self-illuminating power, satisfies the mind. "It speaks for itself; it recommends itself to its subject; it satisfies the reason of the mind; procures its own entertainment by its own excellency." "I receive the truth of Christian reli-

[1] There is a story illustrative of Whichcote's tendency to the use of school language. It is said that one day, seeing two boys fighting in the street, he went up and parted them, exclaiming, "What! moral entities, and yet pugnacious!" (Whewell's Lect. on Hist. of Mor. Phil. in England. 1852. P. 45.) The story is very good, and may be true; but Whichcote's language in his Sermons and Aphorisms is, upon the whole, simple and idiomatic for his time.

[2] P. 46.

gion in way of illumination, affection, and choice; I myself am taken with it as understanding and knowing it. I retain it as a welcome guest; it is not forced into me, but I let it in—yet so as taught of God. Do I dishonour my faith, or do any wrong to it to tell the world that my reason and understanding are satisfied in it? I have no reason against it; yea, the highest and purest reason is for it."[1]

He is somewhat indignant at Tuckney's insinuation that he had been indebted to Arminian sources for his opinions. *Non sum Christianus alicujus nominis*, he exclaims: "I may as well be called a Papist or Mahometan, Pagan or Atheist. And truly, Sir, you are wholly mistaken as to the whole course of my studies. You say you found me largely in their 'Apologia;'[2] to my knowledge I never saw nor heard of the work before, much less have I read a tittle of it. I should lay open my weakness if I should tell you how little I have read of the books and authors you have mentioned—of ten years past nothing at all. I know not who should have been your informer; but truly, in a thousand guesses you could not have been further off from the truth of the thing. And for schoolmen, I do not think I have spent four-and-twenty hours in them *divisim* these fourteen years. Dr Field on the Church I read over eighteen years ago; but have not looked into him, I believe, these ten years. Jackson and Hammond I have a little looked into here and there a good while since, but have not read the hundredth part of either of them. Truly I

[1] P. 48. [2] Apologia pro Confess. Remon.

shame myself to tell you how little I have been acquainted with books, but for your satisfaction I do. While Fellow at Emmanuel College, employment with pupils took my time from me. I have not read many books, but I have studied a few; meditation and invention hath been rather my life than reading; and, truly, I have more read Calvine and Perkins and Beza than all the books, authors, or names you mention. I have always expected reason for what men say, less valuing persons or authority in the stating and resolving of truth; and therefore have read them most where I have found it. I have not looked at anything as more than an opinion which hath not been underpropt by convincing reason or plain or satisfactory Scripture. . . . I rather affect to speak with them who differ from me than those who I think agree with me (I speak of matter of opinions, for about fundamentals I am satisfied), that I may be rid of my misapprehensions, wherein I daily suspect myself, and see cause to think that I may be in some errors, as well as I have been, whereof I have had experience. But this is vanity to use such a *περιαυτολογία*. I am ashamed to think what I have done, and could blot it out again; but to satisfy you wherein you have me in suspicion, though it be folly in me to do it, I let it go. You seem in your letter to anatomise my life; but the description does not characterise me; you could hardly have shot further from the mark."[1] After this significant piece of autobiography, Whichcote returns to criticise Tuckney's denunciation of "So-

[1] P. 53-55.

cinians, Arminians, *collur(v?)ies* of Sectaries," &c. "Do we not agree even with Papists," he argues, "in what they hold as true? . . . Truth is truth, whosoever hath spoken it, or howsoever it hath been abused." "Every Christian must think and believe as he finds cause. If this liberty be not allowed to the university, wherefore do we study? we have nothing to do but to get good memories and to learn by heart." He winds up, in conclusion, with a further bit of self-portraiture. Tuckney had accused him of affecting "school phrases and learning in preaching," and making use of "philosophy and metaphysics." He resents this imputation as affecting the success of his ministry, of which he was not unreasonably jealous. Preaching was his strong point, and the chief means of his influence. "I have to my best," he says, "endeavoured to confirm truth, and convince the understanding of men therein, and to that purpose, as I have been able, have made use of all those principles that derive from God and speak Him in the world. I am sure I have all along been well understood by persons of honest hearts, but of mean place and education; and I have had the blessing of the souls of such at their departure out of the world. I thank God my conscience tells me that I have not herein affected worldly show, but the real service of truth. And I have always found in myself that such preaching of others hath most commanded my heart which hath most illuminated my head. The time I have spent on philosophers I have no cause to repent, and the use I have made of them I dare not disown. I heartily

thank God for what I have found in them; neither have I upon this occasion one jot less loved the old Scriptures. I have found the philosophers that I have read good so far as they go; and it makes me secretly blush before God when I find either my head, heart, or life challenged by theirs, which I must confess I have often found. I think St Augustin saith of St Paul, *Non destruit verum quod invenit in latere Paganorum;* and our Saviour reproves the Jews by Tyre and Sidon. I have thought it profitable to provoke to jealousy lazy and loose Christians by philosophers."[1]

Tuckney's third letter is in a milder and less grieved tone. He has evidently been touched by the personal feeling and modesty shown by Whichcote in defence of himself; and he tries to make the most of their points of agreement rather to emphasise further their differences. *Reciprocare serram* would be, he says, but a poor and "unthrifty" business for two old friends. He would be satisfied if Whichcote and his friends would only so far deny themselves "as to forbear the insisting on arguments of the power of nature and reason" in their sermons, "which in Scripture are rather abased than exalted." "It would prevent heat and opposition, which at all times are uncomfortable, and especially in these crazy times may prove of very ill consequence to the university." As to the Westminster standards, heartily as he approved of them, he would be far from imposing them upon others. "In the Assembly I gave my vote with others

[1] P. 60, 61.

that the Confession of Faith, put out by authority, should not be required to be either sworn or subscribed to, we having been burnt in the hand in that kind before."[1] At the same time he cannot go the length of that "liberty of prophesying which some so call for." "Let truth be truth," he says. "This *libertas prophetandi* I take to be no such truth; and I do not the more like it, but rather the more suspect it, because Socinians and Arminians do so much plead for it, and that, as it is apparent, out of design, that they might not be hindered in diffusing their poison, in their other corrupt tenets, which they are more commonly known by, though the world is not now so ignorant of Socinianism and Arminianism as to confine the one to the denial of Christ's divinity and satisfaction, or the other to the five controverted articles."[2]

He apologises in some degree for his alleged anatomy of Whichcote's life. "God help me," he says, "more to search into my own heart, that I be not so much mistaken in the one as it seemeth I am in the other! God knows I am not wont to look very much into others who have so much to look after in myself. What I did herein I entreat you to think was not from an ill-minded or busy curiosity, but out of love and faithfulness; and if you will please to do as much for me, such 'balm shall not break my head.'"[3]

He naturally expresses astonishment at Whichcote saying that he had never read the 'Apologia Remonstrantium,' "which, when it came out, we so

[1] P. 76. [2] P. 84. [3] P. 82.

greedily bought and read." And he adds, in a very significant clause, that amongst the English authors which he formerly[1] named as having influenced his friend, he should have included Chillingworth and Hooker. In the first book of the 'Ecclesiastical Polity,' "though it be many years since I read it," he continues, "and I have it not now by me, if I forget not *there be divers things which divers discourses nowadays much symbolise with.*" This is an interesting guess, the truth and force of which will afterwards more fully appear.

Whichcote, in his reply, confines himself mainly to a reiteration of the positions which he has already maintained, and rather seems to warm as Tuckney has cooled. The softness and apparent satisfaction of Tuckney's language kindles him more than his rebukes had done. He had, he says, "well considered the matter objected to, and when he found it had given offence, re-examined it all over again *et tandem confirmatior evado;* and I am fully settled in my thoughts that the matter is unexceptionable, and that which must be stood to, highly tending to God's honour and worthy the Gospel: and there is nothing of reality against it but mistakes, misapprehensions, jealousies, and misprisions. Sir, this I would not write to you did I not think the honour of God and truth engaged, the interest of souls concerned; and were not I myself so assured as that thereto, if called to it, I must give attestation with my life. Therefore, Sir, though I dearly love you in my relation to you, and highly honour you for your own

[1] Field, Jackson, and Hammond.

worth, yet cannot I, out of respect to you, give up so noble, so choice a truth, so antidotical against temptation, so satisfactory, so convictive, so quietive, in so full confirmation to my mind of the truth of the Christian religion"—the truth, namely, of the rationality of Christian doctrine, and its fitness to fill and satisfy the human mind. It was impossible for him, he argues, to dwell too much on a great truth like this, and all the blessed moral consequences which it involves; "which, if settled in the hearts and lives of men, would make this world resemble heaven, whereas now, the contrary speak hell broken loose." And, warming as he writes, he exclaims somewhat wildly—"*Too much* and *too often* on these points! The Scripture full of such truths, and I handle them too much and too often! and not discourse of them, rationally! Sir, I oppose not rational to spiritual—for spiritual is most rational. But I contradistinguish rational to conceited, impotent, affected canting, as I may call it, when the ear receives words which offer no matter to the understanding—make no impression on the inward sense." [1]

Again, in the same vein: "'Exalting the power of nature'—to me a strange imputation! I have indeed called upon men—supposing, as I ought, God to be with them, to use and employ all gifts, both of grace and nature, the neglect of which I am sure will prove matter of self-conviction." [2]

Then, as if he felt it necessary to speak his mind frankly, and bring to the light the full differences of

[1] P. 108. [2] P. 114.

thought betwixt himself and his old friends:—"Permit me *animam liberare*—to deal freely and clearly—and I pray it may be without offence. Let the matter of difference be discovered in order to a removal and a more inward closing. I cannot return to that frame of spirit in the judging and discerning the things of God you here and there, in my apprehension, seem to advise me to. I have had, in the former part of my life, experience thereof, and have freely and fully delivered myself up to God to be taught and led into truth; my mind is so framed and fashioned by him that I can no more look back than St Paul, after Christ discovered to him, could return into his former strain. . . . If I learn much by the writings of good men in former ages, which you advise me to, by the actings of the Divine Spirit in the minds of good men now alive I may learn more. The times wherein I live are more to me than any else; the works of God in them, which I am to discern, direct in me both principle, affection, and action. And I dare not blaspheme free and noble spirits in religion who search after truth with indifference and ingenuity; lest in so doing I should degenerate into a spirit of *persecution* in the reality of the thing, though in another guise. For a mistaken spirit may conceit itself to be acted by the zeal of God. . . . I pray God our zeal in these times may be so kindled with pure fire from God's altar that it may rather warm than burn, enliven rather than inflame, and that the spirits of good men may truly be qualified with Gospel principles, true fruits of the Divine Spirit.

And, truly, I think that the members of the Church, if not the leaders—notwithstanding all the perfections of times before us, so much pictured or applauded—on this point have very much yet to learn. For I am persuaded that Christian love and affection is a point of such importance that it is not to be prejudiced by *supposals* of difference in points of religion in any ways disputable, though thought weighty as determined by the parties on either side; or by particular determinations beyond Scripture, which, as some have observed, have enlarged divinity, but have lessened charity and multiplied divisions. For the *maintenance of truth is rather God's charge, and the continuance of charity ours.*"[1]

The correspondence winds up with two further brief letters. Both writers felt that they had delivered their souls, and that if they were not nearer to each other as the result, they at least understood each other somewhat more fully, and were not likely to make more progress by further argument. Tuckney professes himself satisfied in the main, though in divers things he remains unsatisfied. In any case, he is convinced from the tone of Whichcote's last letter that it is better for the present to forbear. At some future time he may put down in writing a reply to certain things which still dissatisfy him. Whichcote, in a few words, says, that he is sure of his own honesty as a thinker.

"If I know myself at all, I know that in discover-

[1] P. 115, 116, 118.

ing of truth I do not dally nor have any worldly design, but with all indifferency of mind do receive from God what I have assurance is from him. I cannot practise upon my judgment, nor use any force to command my understanding into other apprehensions. . . . It is not in my power to fall off from mine own persuasions, conceptions, and thoughts so grounded. Wherefore," he concludes, "if in this point of discerning we differ, there is no help for it. We must forbear one another. And nothing is to be done, unless so far mutually to value each other's judgments, as to think that for such difference there is occasion given to each of us to examine our own spirits, whether we retain that indifference and ingenuity in discerning we ought always to be clothed withal." [1]

These details, from the correspondence betwixt Whichcote and Tuckney, serve sufficiently to bring before us the commencement of the new Cambridge movement. So far, it is seen to concern itself with the same questions already discussed so amply by Hales and Chillingworth—questions as to the non-importance of many of the dogmatic differences amongst Christians, and the fundamental basis of Christian communion in the bonds of common sympathy and charity, rather than in doctrinal agreement. All, in short, that was vital in the liberal thoughtfulness of the earlier movement is taken up and carried forward by the Cambridge school, although there is no evidence of genetic connection betwixt the two. To the charge of being indebted

[1] P. 132, 133.

to Chillingworth, as well as to Hooker, Whichcote makes no reply. He probably felt that in what he had formerly said as to the slight degree in which he was indebted to books at all, he had sufficiently answered such a charge. His own thoughtfulness, rather than the writings of others, had been the source of his inspiration, and the nurse of his opinions. He had borrowed nothing, strange as it may seem, from the Dutch Arminians. The truth is, that such thoughts as to the vitality of dogmatic controversies, and the necessity of a new catholic basis of Christian communion, were a natural growth of the time in many minds. The theological atmosphere had been so vexed, and the polemical spirit had raged with such bitterness, and such little good effect, that the more thoughtful of the younger clergy instinctively turned away from dogmatic discussions, disgusted and wearied, towards some higher and purer atmosphere of Christian truth. They had had, as Whichcote hints,[1] in the early part of their life, "experience thereof," and the result was to make them seek a "more excellent way." It is unnecessary, therefore, to try to make out points of connection betwixt the Cambridge divines and our earlier series of "liberal Churchmen." Hales and Chillingworth may, or may not, have been studied by them; the liberal sentiments which they had sown were germinating, more or less, by the middle of the century, in all generous, open, and rational minds.

But it is easy to detect in Whichcote from the first something far more searching in the shape of

[1] P. 115.

liberal thought than anything to be found in Chillingworth. Chillingworth's principles are sufficiently rational in a definite direction; he emphasises with great significance the rights of the Christian reason. But he nowhere takes up the general thought pervading Whichcote's mind—the "vein," as Tuckney says, "running up and down" all his discourses and letters—of the relation betwixt natural and revealed truth. In what respects are natural and revealed truth allied? and in what do they differ? or, in other words, what is the essence of the Divine, and how is it brought near to us, alike in philosophy and in religion, in nature and revelation? These are but different forms of the same problem, and the problem is the one plainly which, more than any other, runs through Whichcote's letters, and, as we shall see, still more clearly through his discourses. The only writer who had hitherto touched this problem with a true and bold hand was Hooker, as Tuckney clearly enough surmised. But Hooker, strangely, founded no school. His great work stands by itself at the very opening of the century, a pillar of light to which the national mind had given little heed. It was either too much in advance of the time, or the spirit of controversy had been already kindled too intensely to permit of conciliation. Certainly it is remarkable how little the immediately succeeding generations were affected by Hooker's magnificent labours. While they have continued a source of inspiration to many thinkers of a later time, there are scarcely any signs of their having affected the thought of his own or the next age,

much as the name of the writer was held in respect. As we formerly observed, no succession of thinkers sprang up in connection with him.

It was reserved to the later half of the seventeenth century to propagate the seed of religious culture first sown by the Books of Ecclesiastical Polity. Whether or not directly transplanted, undoubtedly the quality of thought is the same. And what is really remarkable is that now, after the lapse of half a century, and in the hands of one who is comparatively unknown in the history of theological opinion, this seed of noble thought is found taking root and springing up into a powerful influence—a school of opinion which was to guide and change many minds. Of this there is abundant evidence in these letters, although half the result was not before the mind of Tuckney, nor could he foresee all that was to grow from the views which so alarmed him. Yet he felt clearly that there was a party behind Whichcote. His main apprehension from the teaching of his friend was that it was representative. Whichcote spoke not only for himself, but for others, of whom he was reputed the head. His preaching would have been of little account if it had not uttered the thoughts of many as well as his own, or at least revealed their thoughts to them. All the enthusiasm of young Cambridge was evidently turned in a liberal direction by the eloquent Provost of King's, and "so young ones in the university tainted."

It is difficult to say what peculiar combination of qualities sometimes gives a man the position of leader of thought in a university. The greatest ability

and the most profound learning may fail in securing it; distinction as a writer has often no effect. In the case of Whichcote there were none of these qualities prominently present. But there was that which is more than all — a certain attractiveness and glow of feeling, a persuasive enthusiasm, an "aptness to teach," which goes right to the hearts of the young, and constitutes a power far more effective than any mere literary or intellectual capacity. The Puritan doctors who settled at Cambridge in 1644, were all men of mark. Tuckney's letters, in mere literary and argumentative force, are certainly not inferior to those of Whichcote. Hill was distinguished as a preacher, and Arrowsmith known and loved for his personal amiability. Yet it is evident that the young thought of the university had gone after Whichcote and his friends. The men who had sat at Westminster and assisted in the composition of the "Confession of Faith" were left comparatively without followers. The very name of "Orthodox," Tuckney complains, was "stomached;" while a species of "moral divinity," which sought to ally natural and revealed truth, and bring them to a unity, carried all before it.

The great instrument of Whichcote's influence was evidently the pulpit. He possessed great powers as a preacher, and his regular Sunday afternoon lecture in Trinity Church drew crowds, Tillotson tells us, "not only of the young scholars, but of those of greater standing and best repute for learning in the university."[1] He contributed

[1] Funeral Sermon.

thus, according to the same authority, "more to the forming of the students of that university in a sober sense of religion than any man in that age." He was the great university preacher of the Commonwealth; and to his afternoon sermons, probably more than to any single means of influence, is the progress of the new movement to be attributed. Both from his own language and the language of his opponents, it is clear that he aimed by his sermons to give a new tone to contemporary thought, and to turn men's minds away from polemical argumentation to the great moral and spiritual realities lying at the basis of all religion,—from the "forms of words," as he himself says, to the "inwards of things," and the "reason of them." [1]

We will consider immediately what appears most striking and original in Whichcote's discourses. They are all, or nearly all, that remains to attest his power as a preacher, and the novelty and force of the truth which he preached. But, in trying to estimate the value of his living eloquence, we must remember the very imperfect form in which these discourses have been preserved. Like Frederick Robertson's sermons, in our own day, they seem to have been printed merely from notes—his own or others'. We are told that in the pulpit he used "no other than very short notes, not very legible," —specimens of which he has himself presented in his letters to Dr Tuckney, and which are evidently the mere bones which he clothed with a living shape in the course of delivery. He had the temperament

[1] Letters, p. 108.

of the orator, which yields, like a flexible, glowing medium, to the inspiration of the moment. For when Tuckney accuses him of using in one of his sermons, in reference to certain views, the very strong expression, "divinity taught in hell," he answers, "The phrase 'divinity minted or taught in hell' I find not in my notes; but it was suddenly spoken." It can be easily imagined, therefore, that, animated and vigorous as many of Whichcote's sermons are in comparison with most of the sermons of his age, they give us only an imperfect idea of the life and impulse of thought which moved him in the pulpit, and which made him such a power as afternoon lecturer in Trinity Church. All the more was he likely to be such a power that his whole activity was apparently given to his university work. He had no worldly ambition; no schemes of authorship, like More and Cudworth. He was a born teacher—one whose highest qualities were stimulated by contact with young minds, and that play of speech which seems to be necessary to the finest development of certain intellectual natures, from Socrates downwards. Such men are teachers divinely called. Their proper place is in the academic chair or the pulpit. Surrounded by questioning spirits and eager looks, there they are great, as the life of thought grows warm within them and overflows in copious and impressive utterance. It by no means follows that they will be equally great as writers. Often they are not. Oftener still they want the impulse to authorship. Their thoughts only rise freely—their words only come fitly—in the

face of a listening audience. Whichcote appears to have been a man of this stamp. And hence his peculiar position and fate. He stood at the head of the Cambridge thought of his time; he moved the university youth with a force which Tuckney and Hill and others failed to imitate. He inspired and formed the highest intellect which it was destined to produce for thirty years. Men like Smith and Cudworth, and More and Tillotson, looked back to him as their intellectual master. Yet he himself never appeared as an author. His sermons were only published some time after his death. They have been prized by all who have fallen in with them; they cannot be prized too highly; but they have not served, as they scarcely could, to preserve his name from partial oblivion. He was infinitely greater in life than he appears in history. One of the powers of his age, his name may be sought for in vain in a biographical dictionary.

His life may be said to be summed up in his academic career, which he continued till the Restoration. So far as can be gathered from scanty hints, he was a warm admirer of the great Protector, whose death, in 1658, he lamented in a copy of Latin verses, commemorative of his government and congratulatory of Richard's succession. This may be supposed to indicate his political position and sympathies. But he was not a partisan in politics or anything else. He was "of too great and noble a spirit," his biographer says, "to follow a party servilely, and was never so attached to any as not to see and own, and seek to serve, real merit wherever it was to be

found." And in evidence of this is mentioned his anxiety to assist Isaac Barrow in his application for the Greek professorship (about 1654), which was refused to him on account of his Royalist and supposed Arminian leanings. Barrow is almost the only great name in Cambridge at this time that remained uninfluenced, or nearly so, by the new movement. Comparatively young (having only taken his degree in 1648), his genius was of that bold, original, self-concentrated type which strikes out its own orbit. It is pleasant to note Whichcote's appreciation of him, and to be told that Barrow "ever acknowledged his good offices and readiness to serve him,"[1] unsuccessful as they then were. All testimonies unite in attributing to Whichcote, as Provost of King's, a happy breadth and equity of temper, and a genuine love of fair play. He was no bigot for his own opinions, deeply as he valued and resolutely as he maintained the characteristic principles which lay at their root. We have seen how widely he differed from Dr Tuckney, and what reason he might have had to be offended by the latter's freedom; yet some years afterwards he was one of the six electors who raised Tuckney to the chair of divinity. He felt, no doubt, according to his views, that they agreed in far more than they differed, and that they were more at one, even when they differed, than their modes of language would allow them to seem to be.

It might have been supposed that such a man would have been spared in his post at the Restoration; but, separated as he was in thought from the

[1] Salter's Preface, p. xxv.

Puritan leaders who had been sent with him to Cambridge in 1644, he shared their fate when the time came for the king and the king's friends to have their own again. He was "removed from the provostship by especial order of the king, and Dr James Fleetwood was put into it." This is the statement of his biographer. He adds: "But though removed, he was not disgraced nor frowned upon." When the Act of Uniformity was passed, he adhered, as might have been expected, to the Church; and in the end of 1662 (November) he was appointed to the cure of St Anne's, Blackfriars, London. When this church was burned down in the Great Fire of 1666, he retired for a while to Milton, in Cambridgeshire, a country rectory *sine cura*, his biographer says—a piece of preferment to which he had succeeded by the favour of his college on the death of Dr Collins, whom he had displaced in the provostship. He had taken the precaution after the Restoration to have his presentation to this living renewed, and he continued to keep it as long as he lived. Here he spent some years in comparative retirement, till the promotion of his friend, Dr John Wilkins, to the bishopric of Chester in 1668, by whose interest and recommendation he was presented to the vicarage of St Laurence Jewry, which Wilkins had vacated.

"This was his last stage." Here he continued in high and general esteem, preaching twice every week to "a very considerable and judicious auditory, but not very numerous, by reason of the weakness of his voice in his declining age." He was about sixty

when thus finally settled in London. The days of his activity were passed; he had done his work, or nearly so; and although he survived about fifteen years, we hear no more of him beyond what we have now quoted. He had his own circle,—his "auditory judicious, but not very numerous,"—who delighted in his preaching, and who loved and respected his person. He kept up his old Cambridge friendships, although he had been severed from all official connection with the university. We find Worthington writing to him there, at Dr Cudworth's in Christ's College. He may, through his friends there, have continued to exercise some of his old influence; but, upon the whole, he was content to live in the background during those unhappy times. He died on one of his visits to Cambridge, in the house of "his ancient and learned friend, Dr Cudworth." Having gone down there a little before Easter, in 1683, "he caught a cold, and fell into a distemper, which in a few days terminated his life." It is added that "he died with uncommon sentiments of piety and devotion. He expressed great doubts of the principles of separation"—(this is extremely natural, and consistent with all his principles)—"and said that he was the more desirous to receive the sacrament, that he *might* declare his full communion with the Church all the world over. He disclaimed Popery, and, as things of near affinity with it, or rather parts of it, all superstition and usurpation upon the consciences of men."

Tillotson preached his funeral sermon, and draws his character after the manner of the time—adding

trait after trait, without much subtlety of insight or of combination, without much glow or enthusiasm of feeling, but so that we can read in his cautious sentences many indications of a high and fine nature. "A godlike temper and disposition (as he was wont to call it) was," Tillotson says, "what he chiefly valued and aspired after, — that universal charity and goodness which he did continually preach and practise. His conversation was exceeding kind and affable, grave and winning, prudent and profitable. He was slow to declare his judgment, and modest in delivering it. Never passionate, never peremptory—so far from imposing upon others that he was rather apt to yield. And although he had a most profound and well-poised judgment, yet he was of all men I ever knew the most patient to hear others differ from him, and the most easy to be convinced when good reason was offered; and, which is seldom seen, more apt to be favourable to another man's reason than his own. Studious and inquisitive men," he adds, "at such an age (at forty or fifty, at the utmost) have fixed and settled their judgments on most points, and, as it were, made their last understanding—supposing that they have thought, or read, or heard what can be said on all sides of things; and after that they grow positive and impatient of contradiction. But our deceased friend was so wise as to be willing to learn to the last, knowing that no man can grow wise without some change of his mind—without gaining some knowledge which he had not, or correcting some error which he had before. He had attained

so perfect a mastery of his passions that for the latter and greater part of his life he was hardly ever seen to be transported with anger, and, as he was extremely careful not to provoke any man, so not to be provoked by any; using to say, 'If I provoke a man, he is the worse for my company; and if I suffer myself to be provoked by him, I shall be the worse for his.' He was a great encourager and kind director of young divines, and one of the most candid hearers of sermons, I think, that ever was; so that though all men did mightily reverence his judgment, yet no man had reason to fear his censure. He never spake well of himself nor ill of others, making good that saying of Pansa or Tully, *neminem alterius, qui suæ consideret virtuti, invidere*, that no man is apt to envy the worth and virtues of another that hath any of his own to trust to. In a word, he had all those virtues, and in a high degree, which an excellent temper, great condescension, long care and watchfulness over himself, together with the assistance of God's grace (which he continually implored and mightily relied upon), are apt to produce. Particularly he excelled in the virtues of conversation, humanity, and gentleness and humility, a prudent and peaceable and reconciling temper."

The portrait is an engaging one, and leaves a pleasant impression upon the mind. It is easy to see the elements at once of intellectual strength and moral beauty which made Whichcote a leader of minds, and gave him so much influence at Cambridge. As he was well-born he appears to have been wealthy throughout his life, and this, no doubt,

helped his influence. He was "frugal in expense upon himself," but very liberal and charitable towards the necessities of others; more than "was well known to many," says Tillotson, "because in the disposal of his charity he very much affected secrecy." He bequeathed valuable legacies to the University of Cambridge and King's College and Emmanuel College, with which he had been connected, and also to the poor of the several places "where his estate lay, and where he had been minister." "He was married, but I cannot learn to whom," says the author of the preface to his correspondence with Tuckney.[1] This event in his life is supposed to have taken place when he left the university for a brief period in 1643, and went to reside at his living of North Cadbury, in Somersetshire. He is believed not to have had any children, and he certainly left none—his nephews, sons of Sir Jeremy Whichcote, of the Inner Temple, and Deputy-Lieutenant of Middlesex, being appointed his executors.

It will now be our aim to exhibit somewhat more fully the substance of Whichcote's teaching. Its main tendencies have already appeared in the correspon-

[1] Dr Salter — from whom we have already so often quoted. We have learned nowhere else anything of Whichcote's marriage. But there is a pleasant and characteristic allusion to his wife in his first letter to Tuckney, where, in excusing himself for not having been able to hear one of Tuckney's sermons at Trinity, preached for him, he says that all he knew of it was, that "my wife told me how much she was moved by your excellent pains, as I think, upon, 'We as ambassadors beseech you to be reconciled.'"

dence with Tuckney; but it is necessary to draw them out in greater fulness and detail as presented in his Discourses and Aphorisms. Four volumes of "Discourses" and a series of Moral and Religious Aphorisms collected from his MSS., and forming the first portion of one volume containing the correspondence from which we have quoted so largely, comprise all his works. They give probably but an inadequate picture of his intellectual and religious activity; he was so obviously greater, according to our estimate, as a living teacher than as an author; but they are all that survive from his pen, or that help us to understand the character of his influence. Unhappily they are imperfect in some degree, both in substance and in form. None of them were published during his lifetime, nor even left by him in a state for publication. Their history is, in fact, a curious one, and of itself deserves attention.

Two years after his death appeared a small 8vo of eight sheets, under the title 'Θεοφορούμενα Δόγματα: or, some Select Notions of that learned and reverend Divine, Dr B. Whichcote. Faithfully collected by a pupil and particular friend of his.' The volume consists of notes on a few texts of Scripture, and a series of what the editor calls "Apostolical Apothegms." Of the editor nothing is known, and the volume itself seems to have gone out of sight entirely. Then in 1697 there was published a 'Treatise of Devotion, with Morning and Evening Prayer for all the Days of the Week,' attributed to our author, and which has also disappeared. In the following year his 'Select Sermons' were printed in

two parts, with a preface which has been universally ascribed to the Earl of Shaftesbury, author of 'The Characteristics.' The preface bears internal evidence of its authorship, and is a very interesting and characteristic document both in relation to Whichcote and Shaftesbury. It contains no indication, however, of the manner in which either the publisher or the writer of the preface became possessed of the sermons. They are held forth as the genuine productions of the author beyond question, in contrast to "some things" which had been lately "set out in his name, which his best friends disowned to be his"—in allusion, it is supposed, to the 'Treatise of Devotion,' printed in the preceding year, or possibly to the imperfect Notes collected by a pupil shortly after his death. A very unnecessary apology is made for the unpolished style and phrase of the author, as "being more used to school learning and the language of an university than to the conversation of the fashionable world." It is further stated that none of the Discourses were ever designed for publication, and that the publisher has sometimes "supplied" the author "out of himself," by transferring to a defective place that which he found in some other discourse, where the same subject was treated; yet it is added, "so great a regard was had to the very text and letter of the author that he (the editor) would not alter the least word; and wheresoever he had added anything he has taken care to mark it in different characters." This edition was reprinted at Edinburgh about the middle of last century (in 1742) by Dr Wishart,

Principal of the University, with a dedication to young ministers and students in divinity. Wishart was himself a remarkable man, of great learning and liberality of spirit. He also edited and prefixed a recommendatory preface to 'Scougal's Life of God in the Soul of Man,' a well-known work of the small school of Scottish meditative divines, who have some analogy to the great Cambridge school in the seventeenth century.[1] Wishart was prosecuted for heresy by the Presbytery of Edinburgh in 1738, among other things for wishing to "remove confessions and freeing persons from subscription thereto," and for "licentiously extending the liberty of Christian subjects." But the prosecution was unsuccessful. Both the Synod and the General Assembly acquitted him, and he afterwards rose to great influence in the Church, and became Moderator in the year of the Rebellion, 1745. Principal Wishart, no doubt, appreciated the full significance of Whichcote's sermons, and sought to extend their influence in Scotland. It is difficult to say how far he may have succeeded in this, or what traces may be found of them in the religious literature of the time, which was then assuming, in the northern part of the island, that somewhat extreme phase of rationality which has been stigmatised under the name of *Moderatism*. One curious testimony to their widespread circulation is to be found in the fact, that an edition, not only

[1] Scougal was born in 1650, and died in 1678, only twenty-eight years of age. He was one year minister of a country parish, and four years Divinity Professor in King's College, Aberdeen.

of the sermons edited by Shaftesbury, but of the others subsequently published by Whichcote's own friends, appeared at Aberdeen from the press of "J. Chalmers" in 1751. To this day this edition is the most common and easily accessible to the ordinary student.

It may have been Shaftesbury's edition in 1698, and the language of his preface, which seems in some respects to have been displeasing to Whichcote's friends, or the mere knowledge that there were many unauthorised copies of his sermons in circulation, which led them in the beginning of the eighteenth century to entertain the idea of issuing an edition, as far as possible, from his own MSS. His nephew intrusted his papers to Dr Jeffery, "who had the highest veneration for the deceased author, and every talent beside that could qualify him to be a diligent, faithful, and judicious editor."[1] The result of Dr Jeffery's labours was the publication, in the three first years of the eighteenth century, of three octavo volumes of Whichcote's sermons, to which a fourth volume was afterwards added under the care of Dr Samuel Clarke. To the same editor we owe the original publication of the 'Moral and Religious Aphorisms,' which were revised and re-edited in 1753 by Dr Salter, Jeffery's grandson, who "felicitates himself most unaffectedly that he lives in an age (a happiness which his reverend grandfather Jeffery could not boast!) in which such a generous freedom of

[1] Jeffery was Archdeacon of Norwich, and author of a volume entitled 'Religion the Perfection of Man,' London, 1689. He also edited Sir Thomas Browne's 'Christian Morals.'

thinking, chastened and tempered by the genuine spirit of true piety, and a most exalted devotion, and by the most sound and exact judgment in religion and all learning 'cleared from froth and grounds,' as the ever memorable Mr John Hales, of Eton, expresseth it, meets with the esteem and applause it so well deserves." "Such men as Whichcote," the same complacent and somewhat indiscriminating admirer adds, "do indeed recommend religion by their lives and by their writings, proving its influence on themselves, and show well-grounded persuasion of its truth by the whole tenor of their conduct, and making such and only such representations of it in their works as demonstrate its entire agreeableness to the best improved reason of man, as show it to be worthy of God to institute and of man to believe and to obey—placing it in its fairest and truest light as the highest perfection of the human nature, and greatest improvement of the human powers; while the narrow systematical pretenders to religion, before and since his time, do all they can to expose and disgrace what they cannot extinguish and destroy. These men (to anticipate the masculine sense and words of the 'Aphorisms') fancy 'they advance religion, while they but draw it down to bodily acts, or carry it up into I know not what of mystical, symbolical, emblematical; whereas the Christian religion is not mystical, symbolical, enigmatical, but unclothed, unbodied, intellectual, rational, spiritual.'" [1]

It is somewhat difficult to group Whichcote's views and opinions scattered throughout his Ser-

[1] Dr Salter's Preface.

mons and Aphorisms, and yet it would be of little use to present to the reader an unclassified series of extracts. We will make the best attempt we can to bring together the main points of his teaching under several heads. We begin with that which may be said to be the centre and most distinctive principle of all his thought—

I. The Use of Reason in Religion.

The following are some of his most characteristic sayings on this subject:—

"I find that some men take offence to have reason spoken of out of a pulpit, or to hear those great words of *natural* light or principles of reason and conscience. They are doubtless in a mighty mistake. . . . There is no inconsistency between the grace of God and the calling upon men carefully to use, improve, and employ the principles of God's creation. . . . Indeed, this is a very profitable work to call upon men to answer the principles of their creation, to fulfil natural light, to answer natural conscience, to be throughout rational in what they do; for these things have a divine foundation. *The spirit in man is the candle of the Lord, lighted by God, and lighting man to God.* . . . Therefore, to speak of natural light, of the use of reason in religion, is to do no disservice at all to *grace;* for God is acknowledged in both,—in the former as laying the groundwork of His creation, in the latter as reviving and restoring it." [1]

[1] Sermon on the Exercise and Progress of a Christian (Aberdeen ed.), i. 370, 371.

"A man has as much right to use his own understanding in judging of truth, as he has a right to use his own eyes to see his way." [1]

"The *written* word of God is not the first or only discovery of the duty of man. It doth gather, and repeat, and reinforce, and charge upon us the scattered and neglected principles of God's creation, that has suffered prejudice and damnation by the defection and apostasy of man." [2]

"Those that differ upon reason may come together by reason." [3]

"He that gives reason for what he saith, has done what is fit to be done, and the most that can be done. He that gives no reason speaks nothing, though he saith never so much." [4]

"There is nothing proper and *peculiar* to man but the use of reason and the exercise of virtue." [5]

"To go against *reason* is to go against God; it is the self-same to do that which the reason of the case doth require, and that which God Himself doth appoint. Reason is the Divine Governor of man's life; it is the very voice of God." [6]

"Religion consists in things that are good in themselves, or that are for the *recovery* in us of what are good in themselves." [7]

"Nothing in religion is a burthen, but a remedy or a pleasure. When the doctrine of the Gospel becomes the reason of our mind, it will be the principle of our life." [8]

[1] 40, cent. i. The aphorisms are arranged in centuries. [2] 46. [3] 58. [4] 60. [5] 71. [6] 76. [7] 89. [8] 91, 92.

"Reason discovers what is natural, and reason receives what is supernatural." [1]

II. Differences of Opinion among Christians.

"By the way I will observe how little there is in many controversies, if wise and temperate men had the managing of them; but when once there is suspicion and jealousy, these make and increase differences." [2]

"All artists differ in their notions; there are different opinions on several points of philosophy; what is one man's meat is another's medicine, and another's poison. We differ in age, in stature, in feature, in gait, in complexion, in constitution of life, in profession. These varieties and differences, as well as harmonies and proportions, explain the infinite wisdom of the Creator. Yet all agreeing in human nature are fit companions one for another, can take delight in each other's company. Why should not they who meet in the regenerate nature, who agree on the great articles of faith and principles of good life, overlook subordinate differences? If there be love and goodwill we come to be more rational, better grounded in our resolution from our different apprehensions. Discourse is as soon ended as begun where all say the same. Whereas he that speaks after, and says a new thing, searcheth the former (Prov. xviii. 17), so no truth will be lost for want of being offered to consideration." . . .

"We may meet in the rule of truth, though we

[1] 99. [2] i. 372.

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differ in the particular application. If there were no contradiction in the several apprehensions of men, we might never be awakened to search into things, and so if we were once in a mistake we should never come out of it."[1]

"The points of Christian faith are as clearly intelligible to all capacities, as they are clearly necessary to be believed by all men. God accepts alike the faith that results from the dark mists of the ignorant, and from the clearest intelligence of the learned. The Holy Scriptures are so written that they are sooner understood by an unlearned man that is pious and modest, than by a philosopher who is arrogant and proud."[2]

"Why should not consent in the main be more available to concord and union, than difference when powerful matters prevail to distance and separation?"[3]

"Every man hath a right of judging, if he be capable; yea, can a man, ought a man to believe otherwise than he sees cause? Is it in a man's power to believe as he would, or only as the reason of the thing appears to him."[4] He that is *light of faith*, by the same reason will be light of unbelief. He will as easily disbelieve truth as believe error?"[5]

"By discourse men accommodate things; in conference they render a reason. There is *gratia vultus*, the light of one's countenance, presence is winning; the presence of men conciliates favour and accep-

[1] ii. 27.
[2] Ibid., p. 28.
[3] Ibid., p. 29.
[4] Ibid., p. 29.
[5] Ibid., p. 3.

tance. When persons at difference talk together, they often find that they stand not at that distance they did imagine. Distance gives tale-bearers opportunity and advantage." [1]

"'Tis neither of our fault that our understandings are not cast in the same mould; or that our organs or bodily constitutions which occasion variety are not alike. It may be, also, our apprehensions are nearer than our expressions. Two who think they say not the same may think the same as to God." [2]

"Nothing *is desperate in the condition of good men;* they will not live and die in any dangerous error." [3]

"God, who will not lose anything that is good, will finally save what is capable of salvation, will not reject malign dispositions which will not be altered and subdued to the temper of heaven. Jerome and Rufinus charged each other with heresy. Chrysostom and Epiphanius refused to join in prayers, the former wishing the latter might not return alive, the latter that the former might not die a bishop; both which came to pass. 'Tis a great mistake in quest for truth to let it run out on some smaller matters which have scarce been thought of by the whole series of Christians of all ages, but only of late." [4]

"They who have rashly augmented the materials of faith have thereby weakened and diminished charity." [5]

"Two things a man may easily perceive, whether he be a hypocrite, whether an heretic. Not the

[1] Ibid., p. 30.
[2] Ibid., p. 32.
[3] Ibid., p. 20.
[4] Ibid., p. 34.
[5] Ibid., p. 35.

former if he means well; not the latter if he be not wilful, but patient to be informed."[1]

"It becomes the modesty of particular persons when their sentiments are singular to ask themselves this sober question, How went the Spirit of God from the generality of His worshippers, and determined itself to me?"[2]

All these passages are taken from two sermons in the beginning of the second volume on the "Traits of the Church Maintained by Sincere Christians." They might be increased indefinitely. Many of the noble descriptions by our author of the essence and character of true religion also well deserve quotation; but the following extracts, with those already given, must suffice to bring something like a picture of Whichcote's mind before our readers.

III. The Character of True Religion.

"A true Gospel spirit doth excel in meekness, gentleness, modesty, humility, patience, forbearance; and these are eminent endowments, and mightily qualify men to live in the world. This is that which makes men bear universal love and goodwill, and overcomes evil with good, teacheth men to return courtesies for injuries. This I dare say, had we a man among us that we could produce, that did live an exact Gospel life; had we a man that was really gospelised; were the Gospel a life, a soul, and a spirit to him, as principles upon moral considerations

[1] Ibid., p. 36. [2] Ibid., p. 37.

are—he would be the most lovely, useful person under heaven. This man, for everything that is excellent, and worthy, and useful, would be miraculous and extraordinary in the eyes of all men in the world: Christianity would be recommended to the world by his spirit and conversation. For the life of the heavenly state, so far as it can be expressed to us, is delivered in the Gospel law and rule, and is put into an act in a Gospel spirit and life. The fruit of the spirit in us is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth. Were a man sincere, honest, and true in the way of his religion, he would not be grievous, intolerable, or unsufferable to anybody; but he would command due honour, and draw unto himself love and esteem. For the true Gospel spirit is transcendently and eminently remarkable every way for those things that are lovely in the eyes of men — for ingenuity, modesty, humility, gravity, patience, meekness, charity, kindness, &c.; and so far as any one is Christian in spirit and power, so far he is refined and reformed by these graces. . . . Such is the nature of religion, that it keeps the mind in a good frame and temper; it establishes a healthful complexion and constitution of soul, and makes it to discharge itself duly in all its offices towards God, with itself, and with men; whereas the mind of a wicked and profane man is a very wilderness, where lust and exorbitant passions bear down all before them, and are more fierce and cruel than wolves, bears, and tigers. The heavenly state consists in the mind's freedom from these kind of things. It doth clear the mind from all impotent

and unsatiable desires, which do abuse and toss a man's soul, and make it restless and unquiet. It sets a man free from eager and impetuous loves, and by these men are torn in pieces; from vain and disappointing hopes, which sink men into melancholy; from lawless and exorbitant appetites; from frothy and empty joys; from dismal, presaging fears, and anxious, self-devouring cares; from inward heart-burnings; from self-eating envy; from swelling pride and ambition; from dull and black melancholy; from boiling anger and raging fury; from a gnawing, aching conscience; from an arbitrary presumption; from rigid sourness and severity of spirit;—for these make the man that is not biassed and principled with religion to seethe like a pot, inwardly to boil with the fire and pitchy fumes of hell, and as outrageous as when the great leviathan doth cause the waves of the sea to cast out mire and dirt." [1]

"The first thing in religion is to refine a man's temper; and the second, to govern his practice. If a man's religion do not this, his religion is a poor slender thing, and of little consideration: 'tis then only a naked profession, and fit to give him a denomination. I say, such a man's religion is but of little value: for it hath no efficacy, but falls short of the very *principles* of nature." [2]

"Religion is intelligible, rational, and accountable; it is not our burthen, but our privilege. The moral part of religion never alters. Moral laws are laws *of themselves*, without sanction by will; and the necessity of them arises from the things themselves.

[1] iii. 45-47. [2] iv. 243.

All *other* things in religion are *in order to* these. The moral part of religion does sanctify the soul; and is final both to what is instrumental and instituted." [1]

"There is nothing so intrinsically rational as religion is; nothing that can so justify itself; nothing that hath so pure reason to recommend itself, as religion hath." [2]

"The more false any one is in his religion; the more fierce and furious in maintaining it; the more mistaken, the more imposing." [3]

"There are but two things in religion: morals and institutions. Morals may be known by the reason of the thing. Morals are owned as soon as spoken, and they are nineteen parts in twenty of all religion. Institutions depend upon Scripture; and no one institution depends upon one text of Scripture only; that institution which has but one text for it has *never a one.*" [4]

"All the differences in Christendom are about institutions, not about morals. He that produceth the best reason in morals, and he that produceth the best Scripture in institutions, is to be closed with. Protestants follow the law of God's creation according to the law of God's institution. Theirs is reasonable service." [5]

"Religion is the being as much like God as man can be like Him." [6]

"Religion, which is a bond of union, ought not to

[1] Aphorisms, 220, 221.
[2] Ibid., 457.
[3] Ibid., 499.
[4] Ibid., 586.
[5] Ibid., 588, 589.
[6] Ibid., 591. *τὶς ὁμοίωσις θεοῦ, κατὰ τὸ δυνατὸν ἀνθρώπου.*

be a ground of division; but it is in an unnatural use when it doth disunite. Men cannot differ by true religion, because it is true religion to agree. The spirit of religion is a reconciling spirit." [1]

"The state of religion lies in a good mind, and a good life; all else is about religion; and men must not put the instrumental part of religion for the state of religion." [2]

"Religion doth possess and affect the whole man; in the understanding it is knowledge; in the life it is obedience; in the affections it is delight in God; in our carriage and behaviour it is modesty, calmness, gentleness, quietness, candour, ingenuity; in our dealings it is uprightness, integrity, correspondence with the rule of righteousness: religion makes men virtuous in all instances.

"Religion has different denominations and names, from different actions and circumstances, but it is one thing—viz., universal righteousness: accordingly it had place at all times, before the law of Moses, under it, and since." [3]

"Religion is not a hearsay, a presumption, a supposition; is not a customary pretension and profession; is not an affectation of any mode; is not a piety of particular fancy, consisting of some pathetic devotions, vehement expressions, bodily severities, affected anomalies and aversions from the innocent usages of others; but consisteth in a profound humility, and an universal charity.

"Truth lies in a little compass, and narrow room. Vitals in religion are few." [4]

[1] Ibid., 712. [2] Ibid., 835. [3] Ibid., 956, 957. [4] Ibid., 1007, 1008.

"The moral part of religion consists of things good in themselves, necessary and indispensable; the instituted part of religion consists of things made necessary only by the determinations of the divine will. He that denies the former is atheistical; he that denies the latter is infidel." [1]

IV. Prayer, and Forms of Prayer.

"In the Reformed Church there is both use of forms of prayers and allowance for conceived prayer; and they are both justified. As to forms of prayer, they are great helps to our wandering mind, and then they are proper and succinct; whereas prayers suddenly conceived are not so, are not always purely prayer matter, which is of four sorts: matter of confession of sin; thankfulness to God for His goodness; acknowledging Him in His greatness, and our dependence upon Him, and petitioning Him for grace. That that refers not to these four, is extravagance in prayer. I do observe a great deal in conceived prayer is very good, but may do better in the sermon. Now this advantage a form of prayer hath, that things are proper and succinct. The true excellency of prayer is a sincere intention of mind in presenting our thoughts to God." [2]

V. Popery.

"An implicit faith in men, or in the Church, this is Popery."

[1] Ibid., 1084.

[2] Discourses, ii. 327.

"There are three great designs in Popery: 1. To keep the civil magistrate in awe. 2. To maintain the clergy in state and honour. 3. To keep the people in ignorance, and so to enslave them."[1]

"The Romanists *adulterate* what is true in religion, and *superadd* what is false."[2]

VI. Miscellaneous Aphorisms.

"He that is light of belief will be as light of unbelief if he has a mind to it; by the same reason, he will as easily believe an error as a truth, and as easily disbelieve a truth as an error."[3]

"I have always found that such preaching of others hath most commanded my heart which hath most illuminated my head."[4]

"The reason of our mind is the best instrument we have to work withal.

"Reason is not a shallow thing: it is the first participation from God; therefore, he that observes reason, observes God."[5]

"Heaven is *first* a temper, and *then* a place."[6]

"The longest sword, the strongest lungs, the most voices, are false measures of truth."[7]

"No man is to *make* religion for himself, but to receive it from God; and the teachers of the Church are not to make religion for their hearers, but to *show* it only, as received from God.

[1] Aphorisms, 502.
[2] Ibid., 698.
[3] Ibid., 292.
[4] Ibid., 393.
[5] Ibid., 459, 460.
[6] Ibid., 464.
[7] Ibid., 500.

"Curious determinations beyond Scripture are thought to be the improvement of faith; and inconsiderate dulness, to be the denial of our religion; fierceness in a sect, to be zeal for religion; and speaking without sense, to be the simplicity of the spirit."[1]

"Determinations beyond Scripture have indeed enlarged faith, but lessened charity, and multiplied divisions."[2]

"It is better for us that there should be difference of judgment, if we keep charity: but it is most unmanly to quarrel because we differ.

"Let him that is assured that he errs in nothing, take upon him to condemn every man that errs in anything."[3]

"In doctrines of supernatural revelation we shall do well to direct our apprehensions, and to regulate our expressions, by words of Scripture."[4]

"It is not necessary, to the satisfaction of him who is offended, that a perfect recompense should be made by the offender, but the offended is master of his own right, and may accept of ingenuous acknowledgment only from the offender, as satisfaction, if he pleases; and expiation is then made, when that which is displeasing is taken away by something which is pleasing."[5]

"Lord Verulam.—Every one almost worships *Idolum Fori*, the idol of general imagination: fools and conceited persons worship *Idolum Specûs*, the idol of particular fancy. It is less to worship *Idolum*

[1] Ibid., 504, 505.
[2] Ibid., 981.
[3] Ibid., 569, 570.
[4] Ibid., 578.
[5] Ibid., 580.

Fori than *Idolum Specûs*, though best to worship neither."[1]

"If I have not a friend, God send me an enemy, that I may hear of my faults. To be admonished of an enemy is next to having a friend.

"There is nothing more unnatural to religion than contentions about it."[2]

"Nothing is more specific to man than capacity of religion, and sense of God."[3]

"Among politicians the esteem of religion is profitable: the principles of it are troublesome."[4]

"Platonists' principle of creation, Ἔρως and Πενία, the activity of divine love; the nonentity of all creatures. The grossest errors are but abuses of some noble truths."[5]

"We are all of us at times in a fool's paradise, more or less, as if all were our own, all as we would have it."[6]

"Enthusiastic doctrines—good things strained out of their wits. Among Christians those that pretend to be inspired seem to be mad: among the Turks those that are mad are thought to be inspired."[7]

"It is inconsistent with any kind of honesty and virtue to neglect and despise all kind of religion."[8]

"It is not good to live in *jest*, since we must die in *earnest*."[9]

It is unnecessary to add to our quotations, much

[1] Ibid., 607.
[2] Ibid., 755, 756.
[3] Ibid., 791.
[4] Ibid., 1081.
[5] Ibid., 1131.
[6] Ibid., 1170.
[7] Ibid., 1182.
[8] Ibid., 1185.
[9] Ibid., 1185, 1186.

as we feel that they give only an imperfect idea of the substance of Whichcote's thought. Its temper and quality are sufficiently apparent. His conceptions of human nature, of religion, and of the Church, all stand forth in distinct contrast to the prevailing modes of thought. A new, broader, and more philosophical element enters into them. It may be difficult to sum up in definite detail the distinctive points of difference; but there is no difficulty in catching everywhere the breath of a new spirit, and in recognising that he looks at the same subjects in a more comprehensive and intellectual manner. Traditionalism, whether of dogma or institution, affects him little. He moves in an ideal and open atmosphere, unfamiliar to the school-theologian. Truth is not embodied to him in this or that form of divine assumption, standing apart from the ordinary cycle of human knowledge and experience. Religion does not displace, or supersede, or make an extraneous addition to other truths. It is apprehended as the summit and ideal of all others. Man's knowledge does not lie in incommunicable spheres—the secular and the spiritual; but in different planes of elevation, the lower tending towards the higher, and the higher sending down its light to the lower levels of intellectual aspiration.

"I cannot," he says, "distinguish truth in itself; but in way of descent to us; truth either of first inscription (in reason) or of after-revelation from God."[1] "God hath set up two lights to enlighten us in our way: the light of reason, which is the

[1] Sermons, iii. 20.

light of His creation; and the light of Scripture, which is after-revelation from Him. Let us make use of these two lights; and suffer neither to be put out."[1]

This is a higher range of thought than that hitherto reached by any Protestant theologian in England, with the exception of Hooker, who, as we have already said, struck into the same vein in a special direction. He saw distinctly in connection with his subject of Ecclesiastical Polity how the lines of spiritual truth in reason and revelation converge; but he did not see with equal clearness, or at least he did not interpret with equally consistent comprehension, their intermingling and co-ordination in all directions, so as to irradiate the whole theological sphere with the light of rational inquiry. Hales and Chillingworth boldly adventured in the same path, but under limitations arising out of the nature of their subjects and the special religious controversies of their time. The necessities of controversy still embarrass Whichcote; but it takes with him, from the first, a wider sweep and elevation. A higher philosophic manner marks even his correspondence with Tuckney, which is directly polemical in form. And in his sermons there is scarcely a trace of the theological polemic. He is by turns the religious philosopher, the moralist, the evangelical expositor, scarcely ever the dogmatist or controversialist. In passing to these sermons from either the High Church or the Puritan literature of the time, we feel ourselves surrounded with "an

[1] Aphorisms, cent. ii. 109.

ampler ether—a diviner air." Points of doctrine and duty are discussed in their broadest rational relations, and not merely as parts or data of an inherited system. Human nature is conceived and depicted not as set forth in the creeds, but in the totality of its spiritual powers and functions as a rational constitution in a rational universe. Religion is not a mere section of knowledge supernaturally communicated, nor a side of life supernaturally imparted, but a culture and discipline of the whole man—an education and consecration of all his higher activities. And so religion is not only not independent of morality, but its necessary complement —not only not an enemy of philosophy, but its highest fulfilment. Christianity binds the broken lines of human aspiration into a well-orbed power, which embraces and completes them all. The simplicity and grandeur of religious truth, and its independence of the special dogmas which divide Christians, had been well exhibited in the 'Liberty of Prophesying;' but Taylor was himself—as some of his subsequent writings show — only partially emancipated from the crudities and formalities of scholastic tradition. He could not maintain, and indeed he probably never realised—in relation to thought and life as a whole—the same rational and enlightened elevation which necessity compelled him to occupy on the subject of the Church. It remained to Whichcote as a preacher to take up the idea of religion in its full breadth,—moral and philosophical,—and, like the Alexandrine teachers of old, and the Platonic temper always, to bring it

into affinity with all the varied energies of humanity. True thought and true power everywhere; all pure and high ideas, all pure and healthy activities, all genuine expressions of reason and aspirations of nature are so far religion. Christianity is distinct and supreme — not in rejecting and casting aside, but in interpreting and completing what is otherwise good and true in man. Morality, even in its most obscure forms, is its shadow; Philosophy its summit. Reason is not only not opposed to faith, but there can be no faith without reason; nor yet any higher reason without faith. In other words, the spiritual life of our race is a unity; all our aspirations are alike divine, whether they are kindled within us by the "candle of the Lord" set up in our hearts, or by the light of the Divine Word communicated to us from without.

To initiate once more such a phase of thought as this—to penetrate to the deeper relations and harmonies of spiritual truth, and so to the unity of all the moral forces which govern civilisation—was a great gain for the seventeenth century. It was something more than merely to expand and moralise the conception of the Church. It was to expand, elevate, and universalise the whole conception of religion, and of the moral rights of human nature; and so to prepare the way for the triumph of those principles of civil and religious liberty which we derive—although not directly—from the conflicts of the century.

III.

JOHN SMITH—FOUNDATIONS OF A CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHY.

In the life and opinions of Whichcote the new movement of thought in Cambridge takes its rise. It is seen springing partly out of a fresh activity of the philosophical spirit wearied with the aridities of the exhausted scholasticism, and quickened by the revived study of Plato, and partly out of a reaction against the religious bigotries of the time, which in their violence and intolerance had disgusted the higher minds at the universities. The religious aspect of the movement is, in the first instance, more conspicuous than its philosophical character and affiliation. Whichcote's relations to the religious parties of his time come into more direct view than his relation to the speculative influences, which, beyond doubt, he also greatly modified. In other words, he is more prominently the rational religious thinker than the Platonic philosopher.

The explanation of this is easy. Religion masked every other interest in the seventeenth century. Both politics and philosophy, although they had broken the ecclesiastical yoke, and were seeking emancipation, had not yet accomplished it. In

order to get a hearing for themselves, they had studiously to court theology, and assume a religious side; or at least to pay deference—if it were only, as with Bacon, the deference of respectful distance—to what was still held to be the queen of the sciences. The philosophical attitude of Bacon is the least involved with religion. Even Descartes is more theological, and professes to hold his theories only with the approval of the Church.[1] But the most striking illustration of the dominance of the religious spirit is Hobbes himself. Essentially hostile as his writings are to the foundations of religious belief, they are everywhere pervaded with a religious tone and colouring. The 'Leviathan' in many of its chapters is a perfect mosaic of Scriptural quotations. The very title itself, and the titles of its several books, are Biblical. It cheats the ear with religious phrases, and the solemnity of a religious purpose, which it breaks to the intelligence with its merciless logic. The difference in this respect between Bacon and Hobbes is curious and interesting. Bacon, in acknowledging the supremacy of theology, excludes it from the circle of rational knowledge and inquiry. He treats it with an assumed humility—a grand air of respect, which has a touch of condescending mockery in it. He bows it out of the court of the sciences as sacredly transcending all nature and reason. Hobbes, on the other hand, mixes his politics, philosophy, and religion inextricably together. We cannot get at the one without the other, or separate them without destroying his whole intellectual system. In this

[1] Dedication of his 'Meditations' to the Sorbonne, &c.

respect Hobbes was the truer child of his age. How men were to live together at all ?—how society was to be formed and the state constituted ?—were in the seventeenth century still identical with the questions how men were to live together as religious beings ? what dogmas they were to profess ? what mode of worship they were to observe ? And so religion naturally took the front in every new movement of thought.

It is to be remembered that Whichcote himself, with his friends and followers, were all clergymen of the Church of England. They were fellows or heads of colleges; they were preachers in the university. All their teaching, accordingly, took a religious turn. They were philosophers in the interests of Christianity. It was their instincts of rational Christian defence at once against the bigotries and the atheisms—as they believed them to be—of their time, which drove them in search of a deeper, more comprehensive, and more inspiriting philosophy.

There are sufficient traces of such a philosophy in Whichcote, although they lie behind other phenomena more prominently marked. His general view of religion as "a seed of a deiform nature"—implanting and strengthening within us all lofty and pure aspirations, and rationally elevating and sweetening the whole nature in communion with God—is essentially Platonic. So also is the whole turn of his thought in its diffusive ideality, his love of the abstract rather than the concrete, and even his nicety of verbal and argumentative definition. We

are told that "he set young students much on reading the ancient philosophers, chiefly Plato, and Tully, and Plotinus."[1] Tuckney accuses him, after he came to be a lecturer at Emmanuel, of laying aside in a great measure all other studies, and betaking himself to "philosophy and metaphysics." The chief objection to his preaching was its moral and philosophical character in contrast to that doctrinal style which Puritans have curiously always considered to be more identical with the simplicity of Scriptural truth. He, in his turn, confesses his obligations to "philosophers," and the good which he had got from them in the "use of all those principles that derive from God and speak Him in the world." He defends with some warmth and jealousy his favourite studies; but at the same time it never occurs to him to put them in front of, or in place of, religion. The chief point in his vindication is the consistency which he has found between them and the main points of Christianity. "I have sometimes publicly declared," he says, "what points of religion I have found excellently held forth by them; and I never found them enemies to the faith of the Gospel." The religious interest is first with him, and the philosophical only second.

The speculative character of the movement becomes more prominent with its advance. The younger minds that Whichcote led and influenced are less affected by the accidental relations of religious party, and the conflicts of religious dogma amidst which he himself

[1] Burnet's History of his own Time, i. 340.

moved, and which gave the primary bias to his teaching. They take up the same questions in their broader spiritual aspects — their more generalised and philosophical shape. John Smith is a Platonist, not only, like his master, because he has found in the study of the Platonic writings certain principles coincident with his own enlarged Christian thoughtfulness, by the light of which he is able to rebuke the narrowness or expose the falsehood of those whom he designates "lazy and loose Christians;" but because from the beginning he has more or less taken up his line of thought from Plato, or the writings of the Neo-Platonic school. Moreover, the questions which occupy him are more directly philosophical. They touch those general principles or relations of thought out of which all philosophy comes, whether it takes a religious or irreligious form. The essence of divine knowledge—in what it consists—the ultimate springs of our rational and spiritual life, out of which arise respectively Superstition, Atheism, Theism,—the nature of Revelation, and the true idea of Righteousness;—such are the questions to which his Discourses are devoted. Religious in the highest sense, they yet involve in their mere statement the primary *data* of all philosophy; and Smith, we shall find, handles them as a preacher indeed—for the Discourses were intended for oral delivery —yet with a freedom, elevation, and amplitude of grasp, which stamps him pre-eminently as a Christian philosopher.

Of Smith's life unhappily we know little or nothing. In some respects the most remarkable of all

the Cambridge school—the richest and most beautiful mind, and certainly by far the best writer of them all[1]—he died at the early age of thirty-four. There was nothing to tell of a career so brief, and which never seems to have passed beyond the precincts of the university. He is a thinker without a biography. Two friends — John Worthington, who edited his 'Discourses,' and Simon Patrick, who preached his funeral sermon in the chapel of Queens' College, where he himself had discoursed with such marvellous eloquence—have given us some sketch of his character, but left much to be desired, even in this respect. There is elevation and beauty, but also a good deal of indistinctness, in the picture which they draw. The lines are grand but wavering, and lose themselves, after the manner of the time, in vagueness and generality; yet here and there there are touches of affectionate felicity, which, in the case of Patrick in particular, break into downright bursts of tearful tenderness over the loss of so much genius and goodness. *Quando ullum invenient parem*, is the key-note of all he says, and the pressure of the painful thought interrupts the flow of his panegyric with the most honest exclamations of grief. "Who can think of his gracious lips, his profitable and delightful converse, his cordial love, without a sigh and a tear—without saying, 'Ah! my father; ah! his glory'?" A recent writer[2] has said, that in all the literature of the period with which he is

[1] With the exception of Culverwell, afterwards mentioned.

[2] Mr J. Bass Mullinger, of St John's College, who, in a small volume entitled 'Cambridge Characteristics in the Seventeenth Century,' has touched, but only very slightly, upon our subject.

acquainted, he has "not met with a more pathetic production than this funeral sermon. The artistic skill is not great, but there is an expression of genuine feeling throughout, with an occasional outbreak of honest grief which produces an effect above all art." This is quite true, and the fact is equally creditable to Patrick and the friend whom he and the university so deeply mourned.

John Smith was a native of Northamptonshire, where his father seems to have been a small farmer. He was born at Achurch, near Oundle, in that county, in the year 1618. Before his birth, Patrick says, "his parents had been long childless, and were grown aged." He was sent to Cambridge in 1636, and entered, as Whichcote had before him, at Emmanuel College. We would infer from this that his father, like many of his class, especially in the midland districts of England, had Puritan leanings, and sent him to the well-known Puritan Foundation to be trained in the true gospel of Protestantism. At this time Whichcote was a Fellow and Tutor in the College; and he is supposed also to have commenced his influence as a preacher. He was nine years older than Smith; and it is expressly stated by Worthington that he became tutor to the young and probably somewhat friendless undergraduate from Northamptonshire. This is one of the few facts embodied in Worthington's rhetorical "Address to the Reader," prefixed to the original edition of the 'Discourses.' It is also implied in his statement, that the tutor's comparative wealth was freely given to assist his pupil. His words are: "I knew him

(the author of the 'Discourses') for many years, not only when he was Fellow of Queens' College, but when a student in Emmanuel College, where his early piety, and the remembering his Creator in those days of his youth, as also his excellent improvements in the choicest parts of learning, endeared him to many, particularly to his careful tutor, the Fellow of Emmanuel College, afterwards Provost of King's College, Dr Whichcote; to whom, for his directions and encouragements of him in his studies, his seasonable provision for his support and maintenance when he was a young scholar, as also upon other obliging considerations, our author did ever express a great and singular regard."[1]

Smith took his Bachelor's degree in 1640, and his Master's four years later; and in the same year in which he became Master, or in 1644, he was chosen a Fellow of Queens' College. The explanation given of his not having received a Fellowship in his own college is, that by the statutes no more than one Fellow could be admitted from any one county, and that the Fellowship open to a Northamptonshire graduate was filled up at the time Smith became eligible. It was at this time, our readers will remember, that Whichcote returned to Cambridge, after a brief absence, and was appointed Provost of King's College. We have no trace of further personal relations betwixt the former tutor and his pupil; but they, no doubt, renewed their old intercourse, and it is easy to imagine the enthusiasm with which

[1] Address to the Reader.

a mind like Smith's would regard Whichcote's growing influence over the youth of the university. Smith's success, again, could scarcely have been less acceptable to his former teacher; while the discourses which he delivered in the chapel of Queens' must have been among the most powerful stimulants of the higher and more expansive thoughtfulness which was rapidly springing up to the alarm of Tuckney and his friends. They "contributed," according to Tillotson's biographer,[1] "to raise new thoughts and a sublime style in the members of the university." Smith is said to have discharged his duties as tutor with great faithfulness, and to have had great aptitude and ease of expression in the communication of knowledge. Particular mention is made of his distinction as a mathematical lecturer in the public schools. His health seems to have been weak from the first, and his illness was borne with singular sweetness and patience. He died on the 7th of August 1652, a few months after Whichcote closed his correspondence with Tuckney, and the new movement may be said to have attained definite recognition and significance.

Worthington's description of his friend throws but little light upon his character. He tells us that he might "fill much paper" in recounting particularly his many excellences; yet, after all, he gives us but a very vague and indefinite impression in such sentences as the following: "I might truly say that he was both a righteous and truly honest man, and also a good man. He was a follower and imitator

[1] Birch's Life of Archbishop Tillotson, p. 6, 7.

of God in purity and holiness, in benignity, goodness, and love; a love enlarged as God's love is, whose goodness overflows and spreads itself to all, and His tender mercies are over all His works. He was a 'lover of our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity,' a lover of His spirit and of His life, a lover of His excellent laws and rules of holy life, a serious practiser of His Sermon on the Mount, the best sermon that ever was preached, and yet none more generally neglected by those that call themselves Christians. . . . To be short, he was a Christian, more than a little, even wholly and altogether such:[1] a Christian inwardly and in good earnest:[2] religious he was, but without any vaingloriousness and ostentation; not so much a talking or a disputing, as a living, a doing, and an obeying Christian; one inwardly acquainted with the simplicity and power of godliness, but no admirer of the Pharisaic forms and sanctimonious shows, though never so goodly and specious."

Besides being thus "a truly Godlike man," he was possessed of "those other perfections and accomplishments of the mind, which rendered him a very rational and learned man: and, withal, in the midst of all these great accomplishments, as eminent and exemplary in unaffected humility and true lowliness of mind. To conclude," he says, "he was a plain-hearted friend and Christian, one in whose spirit and mouth there was no guile; a profitable companion; nothing of vanity and triflingness in him, as there was nothing of sourness and stoi-

[1] Not ἐν ὀλίγῳ, but ἐν πολλῷ. [2] Ἐν κρυπτῷ.

cism. I can very well remember, when I have had private converse with him, how pertinent and freely he would speak to any matter proposed; how weighty, substantial, and clearly expressive of his sense his private discourses would be, and both for matter and language muchwhat of the same importance and value with such exercises as he studied for, and performed in public."

Such are the most characteristic passages of Worthington's description in his "Address to the Reader." They are hearty but featureless, and fail to bring before us any familiar image of his friend. He might have added more, he says, but in the view of "the fair and lively character" drawn by Patrick, he thinks this unnecessary. "If some part of that character," he adds, "should seem to have in it anything of hyperbolism and strangeness, it must seem so to such only who either were unacquainted with him and strangers to his worth, or else find it a hard thing not to be envious, and a difficulty to be humble. But those that had a more inward converse with him knew him to be one of those 'of whom the world was not worthy,' one of the 'excellent ones in the earth;' a person truly exemplary in the temper and constitution of his spirit, and in the well-ordered course of his life; a life, as I remember Seneca doth express it somewhere in his epistles, 'all of one colour, everywhere like itself;'[1] and eminent in those things that are worthy of praise and imitation."

The character drawn by Patrick, amid all its over-

[1] *Unius quasi coloris sine actionum dissensione.*

done eulogy, gives a more lively picture; yet, even in it, there are touches of mere declamation, which leave us very unsatisfied. The tone throughout is that of the preacher moved to an unwonted height of emotion, and giving too ready a flow to exaggerations of language, as he recalls the virtues of his friend. "Let us first look upon him," he says, "in *his eminency, dignity, and worth.* A very glorious star he was, and shone brighter in our eyes than any that he ever looked upon when he took his view of the heavenly bodies; and now he shines as the brightness of the firmament, and as the stars for ever and ever, being wise, and having turned many, I believe, unto righteousness. . . . He had such a huge, wide capacity of soul, such a sharp and piercing understanding, such a deep-reaching mind, that he set himself about nothing but he soon grasped it, and made himself a full possessor of it. . . . He was a most laborious searcher after wisdom. 'A living library,' better than that which he hath given to our college, and 'a walking study,'[1] that carried his learning about with him. I never got so much good among all my books by a whole day's plodding in a study, as by an hour's discourse I have got with him. For he was not a library locked up, nor a book clasped, but stood open for any to converse withal that had a mind to learn. Yea, he was a fountain running over, labouring to do good to those who, perhaps, had no mind to receive it. None more free and communicative than he was to such as desired to

[1] Βιβλιοθήκη τις ἔμψυχος, καὶ περιπατοῦν μουσεῖον, as Eunapius says of Longinus. Patrick quotes, as usual, the original in his text.

discourse with him, nor would he grudge to be taken off from his studies upon such an occasion. It may be truly said of him, that a man might always come better from him; and his mouth could drop sentences as easily as an ordinary man's could speak sense. And he was no less happy in expressing his mind than in conceiving. He had such a *copia verborum*, a plenty of words, and those so full, pregnant, and significant, joined with such an active fancy, as is very rarely to be found in the company of such a deep understanding and judgment as dwelt in him."[1]

Whichcote's pupil, it is clear, had something of his own marvellous gifts as a teacher. He loved to discourse. His mind craved sympathy, and to unburden itself of its teeming thoughts. This was, no doubt, the secret of the enthusiasm with which his friends regarded him, and of the extraordinary interest which his death excited. They felt that not only a great student and thinker, but a great teacher was gone—one whose qualities pre-eminently fitted him to adorn the university, and to influence its higher studies. "His learning," as Patrick phrases it, "was so concocted, that it lay not as an idle notion in his head, but made him fit for any employment. He was very full and clear in all his resolutions at any debates, a most wise counsellor in any difficulties and straits, dexterous in untying any knot, of great judgment in satisfying any scruple or doubt, even in matters of religion. He was one that soon saw into the depth of any business that was before him, and

[1] Funeral Sermon preached by Patrick, printed along with 'Select Discourses.'

looked it quite through,—that would presently turn it over and over in his mind, and see it on all sides."[1] —Evidently a well-balanced, noble, intellectual nature, fitted to rule in the halls of learning, and to diffuse a quickening and powerful influence.

Nor were Smith's moral qualities less remarkable. "He had incorporated," continues his eulogist, "'or insouled' all principles of *justice* and *righteousness*, and made them one with himself. So that I may say of him in Antoninus's phrase, he was 'dipped into justice as it were over head and ears;'[2] he had not a slight superficial tincture, but was dyed and coloured quite through with it; so that wheresoever he had a soul,—there was justice and righteousness. They who knew him, very well know the truth of all this. And I am persuaded he did as heartily and cordially, as eagerly and earnestly, do what appeared to be just and right, without any self-respect or particular reflections, as any man living. Methinks I see how earnest he would be in a good matter which appeared to be reasonable and just, as though justice herself had been in him, looking out at his eyes, and speaking at his mouth. It was a virtue indeed that he had a great affection unto, and which he was very jealous to maintain; in whose quarrel he was in danger to be angry, and sometimes to break forth into a short passion."[3]

Here we have a genuine bit of nature. Smith was

[1] Ibid.

[2] δικαιοσύνῃ βεβαμμένος εἰς βάθος.

[3] Funeral Sermon preached by Patrick, printed along with 'Select Discourses.'

evidently a high-souled, eager, and somewhat impetuous man, easily warmed into emotion for what he felt to be a just cause, and ready to give vent to his feelings with something of passionate earnestness. He had the quick temperament which kindles at wrong-doing or folly of any kind, and which goes straight at its object without management or guile. The spirit which reveals itself by the eyes and mouth may not be a great spirit, and certainly may not always be right, but at least it is never crafty or deceitful. And in his case the diffusive expressiveness of the face was plainly the symbol of a large, liberal, and sensitively truthful soul.

It is this generous aspect of his friend's character that melts Patrick, as he proceeds in his description, and makes him exclaim: "And now what word shall I use? What shall I say of his *love?* None that knew him well but might see in him love bubbling[1] and springing up in his soul, and flowing out to all; and that love unfeigned, without guile, hypocrisy, or dissimulation. I cannot tell you how his soul universalised, how tenderly he embraced all God's creatures in his arms, more especially men, and principally those in whom he beheld the image of his heavenly Father. He would even have emptied his soul into theirs. Let any that were thoroughly acquainted with him say if I lie. And truly my happiness is that I have such a subject to exercise my young and weak oratory upon, as will admit of little hyperbole. His *patience* was no less admirable

[1] "πηγάζουσαν ἀγάπην, as Nazianzen I think speaks," Patrick adds in the text.

than his love, under a lingering and tedious disease, wherein he never murmured or complained, but rested quietly satisfied in the infinite unbounded goodness and tenderness of his Father, and the commiserations of Jesus Christ. . . . He told me in his sickness that he hoped he had learned that for which God sent it, and that he thought God kept him so long in such a case, under such burdens and pressures, that 'patience might have its perfect work in him.' And really in his sickness he showed what Christianity and true religion is able to do; what might, power, and virtue there is in it to bear up a soul under the greatest loads."

His "humility and faith, his ingenuity, courtesy, gentleness and sweetness," are all commended in similar language. He was absorbed by religious earnestness, and resolved (so he said), "'If it had pleased the Lord of life to prolong his days very much, to lay aside other studies and to travel in the salvation of men's souls;' but at the same time he was free from all 'devouring zeal.' . . . He called for no fire to descend from heaven upon men but the fire of divine love, that might burn up all their hatreds, roughness, and cruelty to each other. But as for *benignity* of mind and Christian kindness, everybody that knew him will remember that he ever had their names in his mouth, and I assure them they were no less in his heart and life; as knowing that without these truth itself is in a faction, and Christ is drawn into a party. And this graciousness of spirit was the more remarkable in him, because he was of a temper naturally hot and choleric,

as the greatest minds most commonly are. He was wiser than to let any anger rest in his bosom; much less did he suffer it to burn and boil till it was turned into gall and bitterness. . . . If he was at any time moved unto anger, it was but a sudden flushing in the face, and it did as soon vanish as arise."[1]

Having thus described all his "worth and eminency," and alluded to the last days of his friend's life, which passed away in "a kind of sleep," Patrick's feelings seem to give way altogether, as he breaks forth: "Have we not reason to be so sad, as you see our faces tell you that we are? But, alas! half of that is not told you which your eyes might have seen, had you been acquainted with him. I want thoughts and words to make a lively portraiture of him: my young experience hath not yet seen to the height or the depth of these things which I have here given you a rude draught of; and so my conceits and expressions must needs fall far below that excellent degree of beauty wherein they dwelt in him. . . . There is not one but will cry out with Elisha, 'O the chariot of this place, and the horseman thereof.' . . . O thou who wast both my safeguard and my ornament! who wast a society by thyself, a college in brief, what a loss have we sustained by thy departure! . . . To which of us was not he dear? Who is there that was not engaged to him? Who can think himself as wise as he was when we had him?"[2]

The picture of mind and character raised by these grandiloquent touches is of so lofty a kind that we

[1] Patrick's Funeral Sermon. [2] Ibid.

might be disposed to attribute it in some degree to that enthusiasm of personal friendship which often binds young university men together, and makes them exalt above criticism the parts and influences of some favourite tutor or companion student. This is so common that we are apt to smile at youthful eulogy, knowing well that the only test of what a man is really worth, and what he is capable of doing for any branch of knowledge, is not the intense and frequently narrow judgment of a university, but the broad and well-sifted judgment of the intellectual world. Many a university marvel has come to little and done little for the world's good; whilst some who excited no special interest among their fellow-students have afterwards taken the lead, and left their stamp upon their generation in many impresses of noble and advancing thought. Accordingly, we turn to Smith's 'Discourses' with some anxiety. They are all that survive to represent his genius. They first appeared in 1660, under the editorship of Worthington; and although it was then stated by him that there were "other pieces of the author's" which would "make another considerable volume," no additional remains have ever been published.

It is the highest testimony to the genius of the author that the estimate of his friends is found fully sustained by these Discourses. Written so long ago, and marked, like all the writings of the time, with many unaccustomed forms of language, they are yet instinct with a free, bright, and copious life of thought, which runs as freshly, or nearly as freshly, as it did to his contemporaries. The expression of Worthing-

ton, that his mind was "a bountiful and ever-bubbling fountain," is exactly the expression suggested by their full, rich, and plentiful thoughtfulness. It is not mere eloquence and ability—the easy and large grasp of intellect, as in Chillingworth, or Barrow, or Cudworth—which distinguish them; but an ineffable light of spiritual genius shines in them all. They are "clothed," as the Chaldee oracle,[1] quoted by Patrick, says, "with a great deal of mind," and deeply "impregnated with divine notions." Powerful and massive in argument, they are everywhere informed by a divine insight which transcends argument. Calmly and closely reasoned, they are at the same time inspired. The breath of a higher, diviner reason animates them all. The force of a logic nearly as direct and penetrating as that of Chillingworth directs an imagination as opulent as Jeremy Taylor's. The result is a delightful admixture of Christian philosophy and poetry. Profound glimpses of spiritual truth everywhere open to the reader as he advances, charmed with the rich unfoldings of an exuberant intelligence, rejoicing in the amplitude of its powers and the sweep and glory of its flight. The poetic richness of the style seldom or never, as with Taylor, overbalances the weight of the thought. It is ornate and picturesque, without being florid or tawdry. It is *living*, even through all the trappings and encumbrances of Neo-Platonical or other allusion. The rhetorical and rational, the imaginative and spiritual, are fused and blended into a common intellectual action which enlightens

[1] —— πολὺν ἐσσάμεναι νοῦν.

while it penetrates, and touches with beauty and colour the eminences of truth which it reveals.

The main drawback of the Discourses to the modern reader is the incessant recurrence of quotations. The free course of the author's thought is constantly interrupted by confirmatory statements and illustrations from the treasures of ancient opinion; and sometimes, indeed, as in the third discourse on Atheism, his line of exposition runs almost entirely along an ancient track. The effect is now and then to give an additional richness and interest to the exposition, but more frequently to mar its flow and originality. The native texture of the author's composition is here and there so overlaid and patched, that it is barely distinguishable. It is like a rich garment covered with richer gems, which, while they give a new wealth to the original, yet hide its natural hue and folds. To the scholar and antiquarian student, there is a special charm in this literary mosaic. They like the page studded with Greek and Latin quotations, and the reverent caution which seeks to fortify its steps as it advances by sentences from the ancient masters,—which carries the *spolia opima* of past thought with it as it ventures into new regions of inquiry. But our more direct habits of mind have made us impatient of such traditional ornaments of literature. The modern reader wishes to know what a man thinks himself, or has got to say for himself, rather than what Plato, or Plutarch, or Plotinus, or Tully, or Lucretius, may have said ages ago. There is no indisposition to listen to these ancient sages. On the contrary,

it may be said, that there never was a time when any critical exposition of them was likely to be received with more interest or appreciation. But it is no longer accepted as a part of literary art to be able to weave their sayings into the texture of a theological or philosophical treatise; and still less is it supposed that any modern writer necessarily adds to the weight of his own opinions, by fixing them with even the most ingenious and pregnant quotations from ancient authorities.

The Cambridge Platonists carried the system of quotation to great excess. It was not merely a feature of their style, but a characteristic, so to speak, of their mode of thought. They leant too fondly on the past, and made too much of ancient wisdom. They were never able to throw off the weight of Neo-Platonic tradition, or to rise superior to what appeared to them a sacred lore. The shadow of Plotinus haunts their highest conceptions, and they escape too seldom into the clear daylight, the open heaven, of speculation. Smith is, perhaps, less an offender in this respect than Cudworth and More. Whichcote, in his sermons, offends leas of all. He moves with a comparatively free and unembarrassed step. He had been more in the world than the others, and, as he himself tells us, owed less to reading than to his own thought and "invention." All the younger men of the school were more exclusively scholars and students. They gathered their thought more entirely from books, and, like all men who do so, they bear the trace of the library dust. They like to show the rare

treasure dug from the ancient quarries, in which they have worked with so much love and interest.

The Discourses are ten in all. The first six are closely connected, and form, in fact, successive parts of a scheme of thought designed by the author in vindication of the "main heads and principles of religion." Starting with the important question of "the true way or method of obtaining divine knowledge," he passes, after the polemical manner of the time, to discuss first the counterfeits or oppositions to divine knowledge in the forms of Superstition and of Atheism. He then enumerates the main principles or articles of religious truth to be—(1.) The Immortality of the Soul; (2.) The Existence and Nature of God; and (3.) The Communication of God to Mankind through Christ. He considers the first two subjects somewhat elaborately in successive discourses; but he did not live to enter upon the special treatment of the third. The discourse "Of Prophecy," which is the last of the connected series, was meant merely to be an introduction to this part of his subject; but so many inquiries "offered themselves to his thoughts" in discoursing upon Prophecy, that he had only finished this topic when his term of office as "Dean and Catechist" in the College expired. He died in the following summer; and thus, says Worthington, "he who designed to speak of God's communication of Himself to mankind through Christ, was taken up by God into a more inward and immediate participation of Himself in blessedness. Had he lived, and had health to have finished the remaining part of his designed method,

the reader may easily conceive what a valuable piece that discourse would have been."

Yet, he adds, that the reader "may not altogether want the author's labours upon such an argument, I thought good, in the next place, to adjoin a discourse of the like importance and nature delivered heretofore by the author in some chapel exercises."

In point of fact there are four discourses appended to that upon Prophecy. The volume, therefore, consists of two parts—the first part representing in some degree a connected treatise, and the second composed of such additional discourses as seemed to Worthington so far fitted to carry out the author's design, and to illustrate the special principles which he had intended to unfold in the sequel.

In expounding our author's religious philosophy, we shall follow his own outline of thought. The same ideas recur frequently, and the necessities of his argument and strict sequence of its various parts are not very carefully preserved.[1] The following may be said to be the particulars to which our attention is invited in succession: I. Method of attaining divine knowledge. II. Opposites of the divine —Superstition and Atheism. III. Main principles

[1] The following are the special titles of the several Discourses, in the order in which they stand:—

I. Of the True Way or Method of attaining to Divine Knowledge.
II. Of Atheism.
III. Of Superstition.
IV. Of the Immortality of the Soul.
V. Of the Existence and Nature of God.
VI. Of Prophecy.
VII. Of Legal and Evangelical Righteousness.
VIII. Of the Shortness of Pharisaical Righteousness.
IX. Of the Excellency and Nobleness of True Religion.
X. Of a Christian's Conflicts with, and Conquests over, Satan.

of the divine—Immortality, God, Revelation. IV., and finally, The true character of the divine revealed in Christ. On all these points the Discourses throw some true, and for the time, original, light. None of them is more significant or deserves more attention than the first, which unfolds in a manner the whole line of Smith's thought.

I. This discourse, "Of the True Way or Method of attaining to Divine Knowledge," is, in some respects, the finest of the series. It gives, as we have said, nearly the key-note of all his system of thought—as indeed to know the method of any thinker is more or less to know the substance of his thought, or the conclusions which he will reach. Are we to begin from without or from within? Are we to start with the senses or the soul, and advance along the line of sensation or the line of reason? The alternative is as old as philosophy itself. According as it takes the one path or the other—the subjective or the objective method—it falls into two great sections, and sets up rival theories. To say that Smith was a Platonist, is enough to settle the general character of his method. All knowledge to him, especially all higher divine knowledge, springs from the soul within. It is the reflection of our own souls—the interpretation of our own spiritual life. This will be found to be the pervading thought of the Discourses—the central principle to which they all lead back. In its general philosophical aspect this is known as the old doctrine of *innate notions*, which Smith accepted without hesitation. This may be inferred from many of his expressions.

But it is not in its general meaning so much as in its special theological application that he makes use of the principle. The kind of knowledge which he has everywhere in view is divine knowledge; the knowledge of God, and of a sphere of truth beyond that of sensible experience. The idea that there may be no such knowledge at all; that the sphere of sensible experience exhausts the circle of knowledge—an idea now so familiar—is not polemically present to his mind. There is no trace of Hobbes in any of the discourses. The 'Leviathan' was in fact only published the year before Smith's death; and if he knew it at all, he makes no allusion to it. There is none of that consciousness of a living presence of atheistic speculation, or an antagonistic system of corporealism, which meets us everywhere in the pages of Cudworth and More. The atheism which he describes is the atheism of Epicurus and Lucretius, without any hint of its revival in his own day. Accordingly Smith does not think it necessary to vindicate the general philosophic basis on which he stands. He takes that more or less for granted, and begins confidently on the spiritual foundation from which all his thought rises.

The original of divine truth is a vital sense or faculty within us which lays hold of its appropriate objects. "Every art and science," he says, "must start from certain 'præcognita,'[1] and theology involves in its very nature the supposition of a power within us answering to, and apprehensive of, a Power above us. This power or faculty must

[1] Or προλήψεις.

be vital—of the nature of a higher sense. For 'divinity,'" he explains, "is something rather to be understood by a spiritual sensation than by any verbal description, as all things of sense and life are best known by sentient and vital faculties; as the Greek philosopher hath well observed, everything is best known by that which bears a just resemblance and analogy with it;[1] and therefore the Scripture is wont to set forth a good life as the prolepsis and fundamental principle of divine science; 'wisdom hath builded her house, and hewn out her seven pillars,' but 'the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom,' the foundation of the whole fabric. . . . They are not always the best skilled in divinity that are the most studied in those pandects into which it is sometimes digested, or that have erected the greatest monopolies of art and science. He that is most practical in divine things hath the purest and sincerest knowledge of them, and not he that is most dogmatical. Divinity, indeed, is a true efflux from the eternal light, which, like the sunbeams, does not only enlighten, but heat and enliven, and therefore our Saviour hath in His beatitudes connected purity of heart with the beatifical vision: and as the eye cannot behold the sun unless it be sun-like,[2] and hath the form and resemblance of the sun drawn in it; so neither can the soul of man behold God unless it be God-like,[3] hath God formed in it, and be made partaker of the divine nature. And the apostle St Paul, when he would lay open the right way of at-

[1] ἑκάστων δι' ὁμοιότητος γίνεται.

[2] ἡλιοειδὴς μὴ γινόμενος.

[3] θεοειδὴς μὴ γινομένη.

taining to divine truth, saith, that 'knowledge puffeth up,' but it is 'love that edifieth.' The knowledge of divinity that appears in systems and models is but a poor wan light; but the powerful energy of divine knowledge displays itself in purified souls: here we shall find the true, as the ancient philosophy speaks, 'the land of truth.'[1] To seek our divinity merely in books and writings, is to seek the living among the dead; we do but in vain seek God many times in these, where His truth too often is not so much enshrined as entombed: no, *intra te quære Deum*, seek for God within thine own soul; He is best discerned, as Plotinus phraseth it, by an intellectual touch of Him:[2] we must 'see with our eyes, and hear with our ears, and our hands must handle the Word of life,' that I may express it in St John's words. The soul itself hath its sense, as well as the body;[3] and therefore David, when he would teach us how to know what the divine goodness is, calls not for speculation but sensation, 'Taste and see how good the Lord is.' That is not the best and truest knowledge of God which is wrought out by the labour and sweat of the brain, but that which is kindled within us by a heavenly warmth in our hearts. . . . It is but a thin, airy knowledge that is got by mere speculation which is ushered in by syllogisms and demonstrations; but that which springs forth from true goodness is as Origen speaks, it brings such a divine light into the soul, as is more clear and convincing than any demonstration.[4]

[1] πεδίον ἀληθείας.
[2] νοερᾷ ἐπαφῇ.
[3] Ἔστι καὶ ψυχῆς αἴσθησίς τις.
[4] θειότερόν τι πάσης ἀποδείξεως.

The reason why, notwithstanding all our acute reasons and subtle disputes, truth prevails no more in the world, is, we so often disjoin truth and true goodness, which in themselves can never be disunited; they grow both from the same root, and live in one another. We may, like those in Plato's deep pit, with their faces bended downwards, converse with sounds and shadows; but not with the life and substance of truth, while our souls remain defiled with any vice or lusts."[1]

Again: "Such as men themselves are, such will God Himself seem to be. It is the maxim of most wicked men, that the Deity is some way or other like themselves: their souls do more than whisper it, though their lips speak it not; and though their tongues be silent, yet their lives cry it upon the house-tops, and in the public streets. That idea which men generally have of God is nothing else but the picture of their own complexion: that archetypal notion of Him which hath the supremacy in their minds, is none else but such a one as hath been shaped out according to some pattern of themselves; though they may so clothe and disguise this idol of their own, when they carry it about in a pompous procession to expose it to the view of the world, that it may seem very beautiful, and indeed anything else rather than what it is. . . . Jejune and barren speculations may be hovering and fluttering up and down about divinity, but they cannot settle or fix themselves upon it; they unfold the plicatures of truth's garment, but they cannot behold the lovely

[1] Discourse I., p. 3-6.—Rivingtons' ed. 1821.

face of it. There are hidden mysteries in divine truth, wrapt up one within another, which cannot be discerned but only by divine Epoptists. We must not think we have then attained to the right knowledge of truth, when we have broken through the outward shell of words and phrases that house it up; or when by a logical analysis we have found out the dependencies and coherences of them one with another; or when, like stout champions of it, having well guarded it with the invincible strength of our demonstration, we dare stand out in the face of the world, and challenge the field of all those that would pretend to be our rivals. We have many brave and reverend idolaters that worship truth only in the image of their own wits; that could never adore it so much as they may seem to do, were it anything else but such a form of belief as their own wandering speculations had at last met together in, were it not that they find their own image and superscription upon it. There is a 'knowing of the truth as it is in Jesus,' as it is in a Christ-like nature, as it is in that sweet, mild, humble, and loving spirit of Jesus, which spreads itself like a morning sun upon the souls of good men, full of light and life." [1]

Still again in the same vein: "Divine truth is better understood, as it unfolds itself in the purity of men's hearts and lives, than in all those subtle niceties into which curious wits may lay it forth. And therefore our Saviour, who is the Great Master of it, would not, while He was here on earth, draw it up into any system or body, nor would His dis-

[1] Discourse I., p. 8-11.

ciples after Him; He would not lay it out to us in any canons or articles of belief, not being indeed so careful to stock and enrich the world with opinions and notions as with true piety, and a godlike pattern of purity, as the best way to thrive in all spiritual understanding. His main scope was to promote a holy life, as the best and most compendious way to a right belief. He hangs all true acquaintance with divinity upon the doing God's will: 'If any man do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God.'" [1]

Then returning to his original thought, from which indeed he has never escaped, he once more sums it up in a definite sentence with the help of Plotinus: "Divinity is not so well perceived by a subtile wit 'as by a purified sense,' as Plotinus phraseth it." [2]

The ancients, he says, were not unacquainted with this method of attaining to the knowledge of divine things. Aristotle thought young men, with their youthful affections as yet uncooled, unfit to enter upon ethical studies. Pythagoras tested the sedateness and moral temper of his scholars, "before he would intrust them with the sublimer mysteries of his philosophy. The Platonists were herein so wary and solicitous that they thought the minds of men could never be purged enough from those earthly dregs of sense and passion, in which they were so much steeped, before they could be capable of their divine metaphysics: and therefore they so much solicit 'a separation from the body' in all those that

[1] Discourse I., p. 11, 12. [2] Ibid., p. 12—ὥσπερ αἰσθήσει κεκαθαρμένῃ.

would 'sincerely understand divine truth;'[1] for that was the scope of their philosophy."[2]

As the attainment of divine truth involves a moral culture, we should seek it without dogmatism—neither committing ourselves to others' opinions nor too zealously opposing them. "We should not, like rigid censurers, arraign and condemn the creeds of other men which we comply not with, before a full and mature understanding of them, ripened not only by the natural sagacity of our own reason, but by the benign influence of holy and mortified affection: so neither should we over-hastily subscribe to the symbols and articles of other men.[3] They are not always the best men that blot most paper. A bitter juice of corrupt affections may sometimes be strained into the ink of our greatest scholars; their doctrines may taste too sour of the cask they come through. We are not always happy in meeting with that wholesome food (as some are wont to call the doctrinal part of religion) which hath been dressed out by the cleanest hands. Some men have too bad hearts to have good heads: they cannot be good at theory who have been so bad at the practice, as we may justly fear too many of those, from whom we are too apt to take the articles of our belief, have been. Whilst we plead so much our right to the patrimony of our fathers, we may take too fast a possession of their errors as well as of their sober opinions. There are *idola specûs*, innate prejudices, and deceitful hypotheses, that many times wander

[1] Καθαρῶς φιγοσοφεῖν, as Socrates speaks.

[2] Discourse I., p. 15.

[3] *Credere in fidem alienam.*

up and down in the minds of good men, that may fly out from them with their graver determinations. We can never be well assured what our traditional divinity is; nor can we securely enough addict ourselves to any sect of men. That which was the philosopher's motto,[1] we may a little enlarge, and so fit it for an ingenious pursuer after divine truth: he that will find truth must seek it with a free judgment, and a sanctified mind: he that thus seeks shall find; he shall live in truth, and that shall live in him; it shall be like a stream of living waters issuing out of his own soul; he shall drink of the waters of his own cistern, and be satisfied; he shall every morning find this heavenly manna lying upon the top of his own soul, and be fed with it to eternal life; he will find satisfaction within, feeling himself in conjunction with truth, though all the world should dispute against him."[2]

Divine truth is therefore the analogue of the divine spirit in man. It is to be sought neither in books nor traditions of any kind, but in the light in which the pure soul looks forth upon reality. The science of the divine originates in a divine intuition which guarantees its own contents. Of the nature of a sense, this intuition is yet rational in the highest degree. It is "the light of all our seeing." It is the spiritual eye with which we look out upon the spiritual world, and by the culture and enlargement of which we see always more clearly the great objects of faith and hope and love. There is

[1] Ἐλεύθερον εἶναι δεῖ τῇ γνώμῃ τὸν μέλλοντα φιλυσοφεῖν.

[2] Discourse I., p. 14, 15.

nothing imaginary in the truths thus made known to us.

"The common notions of God and virtue impressed upon the souls of men are more clear and perspicuous than any else; and if they have not more certainty, yet have they more evidence, and display themselves with less difficulty to our reflective faculty than any geometrical demonstrations: and these are both available to prescribe out ways of virtue to men's own souls, and to force an acknowledgment of truth from those that oppose, when they are well guided by a skilful hand. Truth needs not at any time fly from reason, there being an eternal amity between them. They are only some private dogmas that may well be suspected as spurious and adulterate, that dare not abide the trial thereof. . . . We must open the eye of the soul, 'which indeed all have, but few make use of.' This is the way to see clearly; the light of the divine world will then begin to fall upon us, and those sacred ἐλλάμψεις, those pure coruscations of immortal and ever-living truth, will shine into us, and in God's own light shall we behold Him."[1]

He describes, in conclusion, the various degrees in which, in different orders of men, this spiritual faculty is cultivated. There is, first of all, what he calls the "complex and multifarious man, in whom sense and reason are so intermixed and 'twisted up together' that his knowledge cannot be 'laid out into its first principles.'" And so he becomes the victim of custom and vulgar opinion. In such a man

[1] Discourse I., p. 17, 19.

the higher notions of God and religion are "so entangled with the bird-lime of fleshly passions and mundane vanity, that he cannot rise to any but earthly conception of heavenly things." Such souls, as Plato says, "are 'heavy behind,'[1] and are continually pressing down to the world's centre : and though, like the spider, they may appear sometime moving up and down aloft in the air, yet they do but sit in the loom, and move in that web of their own gross fancies, which they fasten and pin to some earthly thing or other."[2] There is, secondly, the Rationalist, or the man who "thinks not fit to view his own face in any other glass but that of reason and understanding." "In such a one the *communes notitiæ*, or common principles of virtue and goodness, are more clear and steady." But being unfed and unfilled "with the practice of true virtue," they "may be but poor, empty, and hungry things of themselves." Thirdly, there is the mystic, who has an "inward sense of virtue and moral goodness far transcendent to all mere speculative opinions; but whose soul is apt too much to heave and swell with the sense of his own virtue and knowledge." "An ill ferment of self-love lying at the bottom" frequently puffs up such a soul with pride, arrogance, and self-conceit. Lastly, there is "the true metaphysical and contemplative man,[3] who, running and shooting up above his own logical or self-rational life, pierceth into the highest life. Such a one, by universal love and holy affection, abstracting himself from him-

[1] Ὀπισθοβαρεῖς. [2] Discourse I., p. 21. [3] Ἄνθρωπος θεωρητικός.

self, endeavours the nearest union with the divine essence that may be—knitting his own centre unto the centre of divine being. To such a one the Platonists are wont to attribute 'a true divine wisdom,' powerfully displaying itself in an 'intellectual life,'[1] as they phrase it. Such a knowledge, they say, is always pregnant with divine virtue, which ariseth out of a happy union of souls with God, and is nothing else but a living imitation of a godlike perfection drawn out by a strong fervent love of it. This divine knowledge, as Plotinus says, makes us amorous of divine beauty, beautiful and lovely; and this divine love and purity reciprocally exalts divine knowledge. . . . Such a life and knowledge as this is, peculiarly belongs to the true and sober Christian, who lives in Him who is life itself, and is enlightened by Him who is the truth itself, and is made partaker of the divine unction, and knoweth all things, as St John speaks. This life is nothing else but God's own breath within him, and an *infant-Christ* (if I may use the expression) formed in his soul."[2]

II. Superstition and Atheism are the two great antitheses of divine knowledge, or, as Smith calls them, the "anti-deities that are set up against it." The former is the darkening of the divine intelligence in man. "Its true cause and rise is nothing else but a false opinion of the Deity that renders Him dreadful and terrible, austere and apt to be angry, yet impotent and easy to be appeased again

[1] Ἐν νοερῷ ζωῇ. [2] Discourse I., p. 24.

by some flattering devotions, especially if performed with sanctimonious shows and a solemn sadness of mind." The picture of God which some Christians have drawn, "wherein sourness and arbitrariness appear so much," too much resembles this. "Though I should not dislike," says our author, "thoughts of future torment, which I doubt even good men may have cause to press home upon their spirits; yet I think it little commends God, and as little benefits us, to fetch all this horror and astonishment from the contemplations of a Deity, which should always be the most serene and lovely. Our apprehensions of the Deity should be such as might ennoble our spirits and not debase them. A right knowledge of God would beget a freedom and liberty of soul within us, and not servility." [1] It is strangely those who picture God as an angry Deity, or mere power of vengeance, who are at the same time most ready to imagine Him so "impotently mutable," that His favour may be won again by "uncouth devotions and formal praises." This composition of "fear and flattery" in the superstitious mind especially impressed Smith. It is born, he says, of our guilty and selfish apprehensions. As the pure and enlightened soul beholds in God an image of all moral perfection, so the unhallowed mind interprets its own fears and waywardness into a Deity of terror and caprice. Wherever God is apprehended as a mere power to be pleased, rather than as a living source of light and blessing to all who trust in Him, superstition is more or less present. And worship, when

[1] Discourse II., p. 32.

directed to the "outward vesture of religion," rather than its inward spirit, is of the nature of superstition. We by no means get rid of it, as some imagine, when we have expelled it out of our churches, or expunged it out of our books. "No: for all this, superstition may enter into our chambers, and creep into our closets; it may twine about our secret devotions, and actuate our forms of belief and orthodox opinions, when it hath no place else to shroud itself, or hide its head in; we may think to flatter the Deity by these, and to bribe it with them, when we are grown weary of more pompous solemnities: nay, it may mix itself with a seeming faith in Christ; as I doubt it doth now in too many, who, laying aside all sober and serious care of true piety, think it sufficient to offer up the active and passive righteousness of their Saviour to a severe and rigid justice, to make expiation for those sins they can be willing to allow themselves in."[1]

Atheism is closely akin to superstition—so much so "that it may seem to have the same father with it." "Superstition could be well content if there were no God to trouble or disquiet it, and atheism thinks there is none." And as the former "is engendered by a base opinion of the Deity as cruel and tyrannical," so the latter arises where the same "sour and ghastly apprehension of God" comes in contact with "more stout and surly natures," and provokes them to negation and defiance. Such a false conception of the Divine either subdues men to fear, or exasperates them, and stirs them up to "contend with

[1] Discourse II., p. 42.

that Being which they cannot bear, and to destroy that which would deprive them of their own liberty. Atheism could never have so easily crept into the world, had not superstition made way and opened a backdoor for it; it could not so easily have banished the belief of a Deity, had not that first accused and condemned it as destructive to the peace of mankind; and therefore it hath always justified and defended itself by superstition. . . . If the superstitious man thinks that God is altogether like himself, which indeed is a character most proper to such, the atheist will soon say in his heart, 'there is no God;' and will judge it, not without some appearance of reason, to be better there were none."[1]

The character of atheism may be gathered from "the confessions of the Epicureans, who, though they seemed to acknowledge a Deity, yet I doubt not but those that search into their writings will soon embrace Tully's censure of them."[2] Their great maxim was to rid the world of superstition by getting quit of all objects of superstitious dread. Observing the apprehensions of men in the view of "the stupendous events and effects of nature," Lucretius, following the steps of his great master, "undertakes so to solve all those knots into which superstition was tied up, by unfolding the secrets of nature, as that men might find themselves loosened from those *sævi domini* and *crudeles tyranni*, as he calls the vulgar creeds of the Deity."[3] But, rightly viewed, there is no inconsistency betwixt the widest knowledge of natural causes

[1] Discourse III., p. 46, 47.

[2] Ibid., p. 49.—*Verbis quidem ponunt, reipsa tollunt deos.*

[3] Ibid., p. 50.

and true religion. While such a knowledge would indeed disperse superstition, it would only confirm a just and wise view of divine agency. "Herein all the Epicureans (who are not the true, but foster-fathers of that natural philosophy they brag of, and of which indeed Democritus was the first author) do miserably blunder themselves. For though a lawful acquaintance with all the events and phenomena that show themselves upon this mundane stage would contribute much to free men's minds from the slavery of dull superstition; yet would it also breed a sober and amiable belief of the Deity, as it did in all the Pythagoreans, Platonists, and other sects of philosophers, if we may believe themselves; and an ingenuous knowledge hereof would be as fertile with religion as the ignorance thereof in affrighted and base minds is with superstition."[1]

The Epicurean theory of nature being a congeries of "atoms moving to and fro in empty space"—even if accepted—furnishes no explanation of the origin of things. For it takes for granted the chief thing to be explained — namely, the principle of motion underlying all phenomena. Cicero,[2] says Smith, pointed this out long ago, and so "stopped the wheel of this over-hasty philosophy." Granting the primordials of Lucretius—"atoms and the void" —the original movement of the atoms still requires to be explained. And supposing "we allow this power of motion to be seated in nature," we should still inquire how such a force and power could "subsist in nature," and further, "how these movable

[1] Discourse III., p. 51.

[2] Lib. i., De Finibus.

and rambling atoms come to place themselves so orderly in the universe, and observe that absolute harmony and decorum in all their motions, as if they kept time with the musical laws of some almighty mind that composed all their lessons, and measured out their dances up and down in the universe." To suppose all this marvellous conservation of force and beauty and order of movement without an intelligent first Cause originating and controlling all, is, according to Smith, "as if one that undertakes to analyse any learned book should tell us how so many letters, meeting together in several combinations, should beget all that sense that is contained therein, without minding that wit that cast them all into their several ranks." [1]

The secret of atheistic thought is frequently to be found in a sort of half-knowledge — when men, attracted by the course of scientific discovery and the "outside of nature," unlearn their original and inbred notions of religion without rising to any higher or more luminous conceptions of the Divine. But the study of nature in itself is highly religious. It may modify and enlarge our thoughts, but it has no tendency to shut out from us the presence of the Deity. On the contrary, all sober and wise minds feel the necessity of this nobler spiritual Presence to illuminate nature and elevate human life. The idea of God not only answers to our rational instincts, but harmonises better than anything else with all our experience, and fits in, so to speak, as the natural crown of all our

[1] Discourse III., p. 52.

meditations, perplexities, and hopes. "It is not possible for anything well to bear up the spirit of that man that shall calmly meditate with himself on the true state and condition of this world, should that mind and wisdom be taken away from it, which governs every part of it, and overrules all those disorders that at any time begin to break forth in it. Were there not an omniscient skill to temper, and fitly to rank in their due places, all those quarrelsome and extravagant spirits that are in the world, it would soon prove an uninhabitable place, and sink under the heavy weight of its own confusion. . . . Remove God and providence out of the world, and then we have nothing to depend upon but chance and fortune, the humours and passions of men; and he that could then live in it had need to be as blind as these lords would be, that he might not see his own misery always staring upon him."[1]

III. Having thus defined the mode of attaining the Divine, and marked off its true character, Smith proceeds to expound its main principles—"Immortality," and "God." There can be no religion without these "two fundamentals;" to which he added the "communication of God to mankind through Christ;" although he was only able to treat of the preliminary aspect of this subject under the name of "Prophecy."

1. Immortality may be said to be the primary datum of religious belief. Without this, man sinks back into the mere order of nature, and whatever higher elements his life may embrace, there is no

[1] Discourse III., p. 59.

permanent spring of elevation or religious interest in it. Indeed, without a Soul, or substantive reality of divine life transcending the common life of nature which he shares with other beings, man cannot be said to have any true knowledge of God. For it is only "by a contemplation of our own souls that we can climb up to the understanding of the Deity."[1]

Three preliminary considerations must be kept in view in reference to the question of immortality, — first, the natural belief which men commonly have that their souls are immortal; secondly, the immediate relation of the truth to our spiritual experience; and, thirdly, the principle that "no substantive and indivisible thing ever perisheth." There may be said to be a *consensus gentium* in favour of the idea of immortality; and although this *consensus* in some things may be no proof of their truth, yet "we cannot easily conceive how any prime notion, that hath no dependency on any other antecedent to it, should be generally entertained, did not the common dictate of nature or reason, acting alike in all men, move them to conspire together in the embracing of it." Again, it is only possible for us to know what our souls really are by self-reflection. We "can only steal from them their own secrets" by direct converse with themselves. "All those discourses which have been written of the soul's heraldry, will not blazon it so well to us as itself will do. When we turn our own eyes in upon it, it will soon tell us its own royal pedigree and noble extraction, by those sacred hieroglyphics

[1] Discourse III., p. 66.

which it bears upon itself."[1] Finally, the imperishableness of every true substance is a direct corollary from one of the first principles of the atheistic philosophy itself—"*ex nihilo fieri nil, et in nihilum nil posse reverti.*" "And indeed, if we collate all our own observations and experience with such as the history of former times hath delivered to us, we shall not find that ever any substance was quite lost."[2] According to "the common distinction, all substantial being is either body, and so divisible, and of three dimensions; or else it is something which is not properly a *body* or *matter*, and so hath no such dimensions, . . . and this is nothing else but what is commonly called *spirit*. Though yet we will not be too critical in depriving everything which is not grossly corporeal of all kind of extension."[3]

In conducting his argument, Smith, after the manner of his time, fails to keep quite distinct his various lines of thought. But the following may be enumerated as the main grounds on which he rests the proof of the soul's immortality—(*a*) its incorporeity; (*b*) its spontaneity; (*c*) its power of forming abstract and necessary truths; and lastly (*d*), the indestructibility of its moral attributes.

(*a*) He views the question of the soul's incorporeity, first, *ab absurdo*. For, let us make the supposition that the "substance of the soul is nothing else but body" in however subtle a form, then of course it is infinitely divisible as all bodies are. It

[1] Discourse III., p. 70.
[2] Ibid., p. 71.
[3] Ibid., p. 72, 73. This is a curious anticipation of More's favourite idea about the applicability of extension to spiritual being.

is composed of the particles of other bodies, and "must receive its augmentation from that food-nourishment which is taken in as the body doth. So that the very grass we walk over in the fields, the dust and mire in the streets that we tread upon, may, according to the true meaning of this dull philosophy, after many refinings, macerations, and maturations, which nature performs by the help of motion, spring up into so many rational souls, and prove as wise as any Epicurean, and discourse as subtily of what it once was, when it lay drooping in a senseless passiveness."[1] The conceit is so gross, in his opinion, as not to deserve any serious answer. A "witty sarcasm" of Plutarch is enough to confute it.[2] He enters, at the same time, into a detailed exposure of the Lucretian doctrine of the genesis of the soul from the finest and most minute atoms—atoms of "such perfect spherical and small figures" as may be capable of the swiftest movement. Admitting such atoms, the question arises, Whence their movement? And admitting the power of motion to be originally inherent in them, he farther asks, "How shall we force up these particles of matter into any true and real perceptions, and make them perceive their own or others' motions—*motus sensiferi*,"[3] as Lucretius himself calls them. The power of sensation can no more spring from any such combination of atoms, he says, than "vision can rise out of a glass, whereby it should be able to perceive these *idola* that paint

[1] Discourse IV., c. iii. p. 75

[2] The following is the "witty sarcasm" which he quotes in his text:—ἡ μήτηρ ἀτόμους ἔσχεν ἐν αὐτῇ τοιαύτας, οἵαι συνελθοῦσαι σοφὸν ἂν ἐγέννησαν.

[3] Ibid., p. 77.

themselves upon it, though it were never so exactly polished, and they much finer than they are or can be."[1] A cause can never "rise in its production above the height of its own nature and virtue;" and the smallest *corpuscula* in the shape of atoms, which have no power of sense in themselves, can never produce it by "any kind of concourse or motion." Lucretius virtually admits this, by calling in the aid of a *mobilis vis*—something of the nature of an efflux of matter, rather than matter itself—to account for the primary motions of sense.[2] He may not allow this to be called anything else but matter, —yet he cannot explain what kind of matter it is. By it he understands, not merely an active power of motion, but a more subtle energy, whereby the force and nature of any motion is perceived and insinuated by its own strength in the bodies moved; as if these sorry bodies by their impetuous justling together could awaken one another out of their drowsy lethargy, and make each other hear their mutual impetuous knocks: which is as absurd as to think a musical instrument should hear its own

[1] Discourse IV., c. iii. p. 77, 78.

[2] The following is the passage to which he refers from the Third Book:—

"Sic calor, atque aër, et venti cæca potestas
Mista creant unam naturam, et mobilis illa
Vis, initium motûs abs se quæ dividit ollis:
Sensifer unde oritur primùm per viscera motus.
Nam penitus prorsum latet hæc natura subéstque;
Nec magis hac infra quidquam est in corpore nostro;
Atque anima 'st animæ proporrò totius ipsa.
Quod genus in nostris membris et corpore toto
Misti latens animi vis est, animæque potestas
Corporibus quia de parvis paucisque creata est,
Sic tibi nominis hæc expers vis, facta minutis
Corporibus, latet."

sounds, and take pleasure in those harmonious airs that are played upon it. For that which we call sensation is not the motion or impression which one body makes upon another, but a recognition of that motion; and therefore to attribute that to a body, is to make a body privy to its own acts and passions, to act upon itself, and to have a true and proper self-feeling virtue."[1]

Advancing in his attack on the Lucretian doctrine, Smith contends that even if it could explain the origin of sense, there is a higher principle of knowledge in man which it is wholly unable to explain. Lucretius, it is true, does not allow any such higher principle. All our knowledge is based by him on the senses. But according to our author, he is refuted by his own arguments against the sceptics, in reply to whose assertion, that *nothing can be known*, he maintains that in such a case we cannot know so much as that *we know nothing*, or recognise any distinction betwixt knowledge and ignorance.[2] The senses themselves cannot yield us this distinction. For they have no power of discrimination or judgment, and report merely their own affections — which they always do faithfully, whether sound or unsound. In the senses themselves there is and can be no mistake. "When the eye finds the sun's circle represented within itself of no greater bigness than a foot diameter, it is not at all herein mistaken; nor a distempered palate,

[1] Discourse IV., c. iii. p. 81.

[2] Quæram, quum in rebus veri nil viderit ante;
Unde sciat, quid sit scire, et nescire vicissim
Notitiam veri quæ res falsique crearit.

when it tastes a bitterness in the sweetest honey." All is true *qua* the mere sense. But a higher principle of reflection or reason comes in to modify and correct our sensations; and without this principle we could not make a beginning of knowledge at all. We could never get beyond the confused and indeterminate mass of our own sensations, nor realise ourselves as rational unities, capable of science. And this higher rational consciousness or cognitive power "whereby we judge and discern things is so far from being a body, that," according to our author, "it must retract and withdraw itself from all bodily operation whensoever it will nakedly discern truth. For should our souls always mould their judgment of things according to those impressions[1] which seem to be framed thereof in the body, they must then do nothing else but chain up errors and delusions, one with another instead of truth; as should the judgments of our understandings wholly depend upon the sight of our eyes, we should then conclude that our mere accesses from any visible object have such a magical power to change the magnitudes of visible objects, and to transform them into all varieties of figures and fashions; and so attribute all that variety to them which we find in our corporeal perceptions. Or, should we judge of gustables by our taste, we should attribute to one and the self-same thing all that variety which we find in our own palates; which is an unquestionable argument that that power whereby we discern of things, and make judgments of them different and sometimes contrary to those per-

[1] *παθήματα.*

ceptions that are the necessary results of all organical functions, is something distinct from the body; and therefore, though the soul, as Plato hath well observed, be various and divisible accidentally in these sensations and motions wherein it extends and spreads itself, as it were, upon the body,[1] and so, according to the nature and measure thereof, perceives its impressions—yet it is indivisible, returning into itself.[2] Whensoever it will speculate truth itself, it will not then listen to the several clamours and votes of these rude senses which always speak with divided tongues, but it consults some clearer oracle within itself; and therefore Plotinus hath well concluded concerning the body—'Should a man make use of his body in his speculations,'[3] it will entangle his mind with so many contradictions that it will be impossible to attain to any true knowledge of things. We shall conclude this, therefore, as Tully doth his contemplation of the soul's operations about the frame of nature, the fabric of the heavens, and motions of the stars: 'The mind which understands these things is like to that in the heavens which made them.'"[4]

Smith dwells particularly on the unifying power of the soul—its capacity of collecting all its perceptions, and bringing them to a centre — and again on its capacity of "looking before and after," and holding alike the future and the past before it in a living thread of consciousness—as evidences of

[1] μεριστὴ περὶ τὰ σώματα.

[2] ἐν ἑαυτῇ ἀμερίστη.

[3] ἐμπόδιον τοῦτο, εἴ τις αὐτῷ ἐν ταῖς σκέψεσι προσχρῷτο.—Enn. iv., lib. iii.

[4] "*Animus qui hæc intelligit similis est ejus qui ea fabricatus in cælo est.*"—Discourse IV., c. iii. p. 86, 87.

its immortality. "I cannot think," he concludes, "Epicurus could in his cool thoughts be so unreasonable as to persuade himself that all the shuffling and cutting of atoms could produce such a divine piece of wisdom as this is. What matter can thus bind up past, present, and future time together? which, while the soul of man doth, it seems to imitate (as far as its own finite nature will permit it to strive after an imitation of) God's eternity; and grasping and gathering together a long series of duration into itself, makes an essay to free itself from the rigid laws of it, and to purchase to itself the freedom of a true eternity. . . . Though it seems to be continually sliding from itself in those several vicissitudes and changes which it runs through in the constant variety of its own effluxes and emanations; yet it is always returning back again to its first original, by a swift remembrance of all those motions and multiplicity of operations which have begot in it the first sense of this constant efflux. As if we should see a sunbeam perpetually flowing forth from the bright body of the sun, and yet ever returning back to it again; it never loseth any part of its being, because it never forgets what itself was; and though it may number out never so vast a length of its duration, yet it never comes nearer to its old age, but carrieth a lively sense of its youth and infancy along with it, which it can at pleasure lay a fast hold on. . . . Such a jewel as this is too precious to be found in a dunghill; mere matter could never thus stretch forth its feeble force, and spread itself over all its own

former pre-existences. We may as well suppose this dull and heavy earth we tread upon to know how long it hath dwelt in this part of the universe that now it doth, and what variety of creatures have in all past ages sprung forth from it, and all those occurrences and events which have during all this time happened upon it."[1]

(*b*) Having thus vindicated the distinction of the soul from matter in those relations which bring it most in contact with matter, Smith dwells with comparative brevity on those special properties characteristic of its essence which appear to him still more plainly to attest its high descent and destiny. Is not the soul clearly distinguished from the body by its power of self-action? Many of our actions, it is true, are automatic, and some even unconscious; but there are others which spring directly from the soul itself, and are done solely "at the dictate and by the commission of our own wills." It may be argued whether the first spring of such actions is in the understanding or the will; but in either case their spring is within the soul itself, and not in anything *ab extra*. The soul has "innate force to stir up such thoughts and motions within itself as it finds itself most free to."[2] How entirely distinct is such a force or power from any property of matter! "A fatal determination sits in all the wheels of corporeal motion."[3] But here the movement is from within, and as entirely free as reason can conceive. The soul finds itself *non vi alienâ sed suâ moveri*. And surely a being thus conscious of a freedom which

[1] Discourse IV., c. iii. p. 88, 89, 91. [2] Ibid., c. iv. p. 96. [3] Ibid., p. 97.

"absolves it from the rigid laws of matter" cannot be legitimately confounded with matter, or supposed subject to its decay and dissolution?

(*c*) And this is still more evident in the view of the necessary and immutable truths—mathematical and moral—which the soul is capable of forming and holding clearly before it. To such truths there is nothing exactly corresponding in the world of experience. They are more true, — "transcendently more certain than any sensible thing can be." "The apodictical principles of geometry are altogether inimitable in the purest matter that fancy can imagine." They must "needs therefore depend upon something infinitely more pure than matter, which hath all that stability and certainty within itself which it gives to those infallible demonstrations."[1] Nor are our higher moral axioms less "badges of an eternal nature." "Such are the archetypal ideas of justice, wisdom, goodness, truth, eternity, omnipotency, and all those either moral, physical, or metaphysical notions, which are either the first principles of science, or the ultimate complement and final perfection of it. These we always find to be the same, and know that no exorcism of material mutations have any power over them: though we ourselves are but of yesterday, and mutable every moment, yet these are eternal, and depend not upon any mundane vicissitudes; neither could we ever gather them from our observation of any material thing where they were never sown."[2] Underived from external experience, these ideas are the cate-

[1] Discourse IV., c. v. p. 101.

[2] Ibid., c. vi. p. 104, 105.

gories or affirmations of the soul itself, which must be held to share in their eternity and immutability.

(*d*) But the highest of all proofs of the soul's immortality is the indestructibility of true virtue. In this there is a divine force which unites us to God Himself, and makes us feel "partakers of the divine nature." Our higher speculations may beget within us a sufficient conviction of our higher destiny; "but it is only true goodness and virtue in the souls of men that can make them both know and love, believe and delight themselves in their own immortality. Though every good man is not so logically subtile as to be able by fit mediums to demonstrate his own immortality, yet he sees it in a higher light. His soul being purged and enlightened by true sanctity, is more capable of those divine irradiations whereby it feels itself in conjunction with God. . . . It knows it shall never be deserted of that free goodness that always embraceth it: it knows that Almighty love which it lives by to be stronger than death, and more powerful than the grave; it will not suffer these holy ones that are partakers of it to live in hell, or their souls to see corruption; and though worms may devour their flesh, and putrefaction enter into those bones that fence it, yet it knows that its Redeemer lives, and that it shall at last see Him with a pure intellectual eye, which will then be clear and bright, when all that earthly dust, which converse with this mortal body filled it with, shall be removed: it knows that God will never forsake His own life which He hath quickened in it. He will never deny those ardent desires of a blissful fruition of Himself, which the

lively sense of His own goodness hath excited within it: those breathings and gaspings after an eternal participation of Him are but the energy of His own breath within us."[1]

2. In passing to "the other cardinal principle of all religion," Smith does not attempt any formal proof of the divine Existence. He gives no hint of an acquaintance with Descartes' recent arguments on the subject—so familiar to both Cudworth and More; nor does he bring into view the old argument from Design which must have been so well known to him in the pages of Cicero, whom he quotes frequently. He starts with the Divine as already given in that spiritual side of humanity which he advocates so strongly—adopting the language of Plotinus, that "he who reflects upon himself reflects upon his own original,"[2] and "finds the clearest impression of some eternal nature and perfect being stamped upon his own soul." "God," he says, "has so copied forth Himself into the whole life and energy of man's soul, and that the lovely characters of Divinity may be most easily seen and read of all men within themselves: as they say Phidias the famous statuary, after he had made the statue of Minerva with the greatest exquisiteness of art to be set up in the Acropolis at Athens, afterwards impressed his own image so deeply in her buckler, that no one could delete or efface it without destroying the whole statue."[3] And if we would know what the *impress* of souls is, it is nothing but God Himself, who

[1] Discourse IV., c. vii. p. 109, 110.

[2] Εἰς ἑαυτὸν ἐπιστρέφων εἰς ἀρχὴν ἐπιστρέφει.

[3] *Ut nemo delere possit aut divellere, qui totam statuam non imminueret.*

could not write His own name, so as that it might be read, but only in rational natures. Neither could He make such without imparting such an imitation of His own eternal understanding to them as might be a perpetual memorial of Himself within them. And whenever we look upon our own soul in a right manner, we shall find an Urim and Thummim there, by which we may ask counsel of God Himself, who will have this always borne upon its breastplate. . . . For though God hath copied forth His own perfections in this conspicable and sensible world, according as it is capable of entertaining them; yet the most clear and distinct copy of Himself could be imparted to none else but to intelligible and inconspicable natures; and though the whole fabric of this visible universe be whispering out the notions of a Deity, and always inculcates this lesson [of its divine origin] to the contemplators of it;[1] yet we cannot understand it without some interpreter within. 'The heavens,' indeed, 'declare the glory of God, and the firmament shows His handiwork,' and 'that which may be known of God,'[2] even 'His eternal power and Godhead,' as St Paul tells us, is to be seen in these external appearances: yet it must be something within that must instruct us in all these mysteries, and we shall then best understand them, when we compare that copy which we find of them within ourselves with that which we see without us. The schoolmen have well compared sensible and intelligent beings in

[1] Ὡς ἐμὲ πεποίηκεν ὁ θεὸς, as Plotinus expresseth it.

[2] Τὸ γνωστὸν τοῦ θεοῦ.

reference to the Deity, when they tell us that the one do only represent *vestigia Dei*, the other *faciem Dei.*"[1]

According to this view, the divine Existence is regarded as a postulate of our spiritual reason. Intuition at once reveals and guarantees it. The Soul and God are correlative facts — the latter plainly involved in the former, and attested thereby. Given the one, we have the other. Blot out the spiritual reason or soul as a distinctive element in humanity, and the divine Existence, or at least any valid authentication of it, disappears. If we have no souls, we can never find God. If we have, it is unnecessary to search for His shadow in nature, when His presence is clearly revealed within ourselves.

The soul, according to our author, not only witnesses to the fact of the divine Existence, but, moreover, to the divine character and attributes. Its affirmation of the Divine is no mere blank assertion of a first principle,[2] but a revelation of a living God, one in being, and infinite in power, freedom, and love. "When we reflect upon our own idea of pure and perfect reason, we know that our own souls are not it, but only partake of it." "Neither we nor any finite thing contain the source of reason within ourselves."[3] And this very contingency and imperfection of our own rational consciousness forces us to recognise an absolute and perfect reason. The idea within us, in its very successiveness and growth, will not suffer us to rest in

[1] Discourse V., c. i. p. 134-136.
[2] Or ἀρχή.
[3] Discourse V., c. ii. p. 137.

any reality short of the Infinite—an original and uncreated unity,[1] the fountain of all special and partial being. "As time lies in the basis of all finite life, whereby it is enabled by degrees to display all the virtue of its own essence, which it cannot do at once; so eternity lies at the foundation of Divinity, whereby it becomes one 'without any shadow of turning,' as St James speaks,—without any variety or multiplicity within itself,—of which all created beings that are carried down in the current of time partake."[2]

In a similar manner, as we find within ourselves a will—the executive of our own reason and judgment—so we infer along with the divine reason an almighty Will. "The purest mind must also needs be the most almighty life and spirit; and as it comprehends all things, and sums them up together in its infinite knowledge, so it must also comprehend them all in its own life and power."[3] Such a will, being without limitations, is absolutely free. There are no bounds to it. Yet "we must not conceive God to be the freest agent, because He can do and prescribe what He pleaseth, and so set up an absolute will which shall make both law and reason, as some imagine. For as God cannot know Himself to be any other than what indeed He is; so neither can He will Himself to be anything else than what He is, or that anything else should swerve from those laws which His own eternal nature and understanding prescribes to it."[4] There is nothing therefore arbitrary or without reason in the divine

[1] Or *μονάς*.
[2] Discourse V., c. ii. p. 142.
[3] Ibid., p. 139.
[4] Ibid., p. 144.

Will. Moving with the most perfect freedom, "yet it is never bereft of eternal light and truth to act by;" and although we may not be able to see a reason for all the divine actions, we may be sure "they were neither done against it nor without it."

From the same principles we may conclude the perfection of the divine love, which in its very nature rises superior to all the passions and disturbances "whereby our love is wont to explicate and unfold its affection towards its object." As it is "infinitely ardent and potent, so it is always calm and serene, unchangeable, having no such ebbings and flowings, no such diversity of stations and retrogradations as love hath in us which ariseth from the weakness of our understandings, that do not present things to us always in the same orient lustre and beauty."[1]

The divine nature is thus, according to our author, the reflex perfection of all the higher faculties of the human soul. It is their ideal realised. And the very dimness of the ideal in us only suggests the more strongly the necessity of its realisation in the Divine. *There it is*,—a power within us,—a presence haunting us. How should we have it at all unless there is some divine reality corresponding to it? He emphasises in this respect our restless longing after Supreme Good. This unsatisfied ideal is of itself enough to lead us to the knowledge of God, unless our life be an illusion. For what is its meaning? Does it not point us beyond ourselves to Another in whom alone we can find satisfaction? The

[1] Discourse V., c. ii. p. 140.

very earnestness with which men pursue an unattainable happiness—search for it "through all the vast wilderness of this world," and find it not—does this not indicate a source of happiness above them? And thus the heart as well as the reason of man witnesses to a living God. He is the Supreme Reality in which all our aspirations orb and complete themselves—"not only the eternal Reason and almighty Mind which our understandings converse with, but also that unstained Beauty and Supreme Good after which our wills are perpetually aspiring." [1]

Having thus explained and vindicated the idea of God, Smith draws various deductions or inferences, with which we need not occupy ourselves. Their main effect is to show, on the one hand, that *communication* is, so to speak, the natural expression of the fulness of the divine benignity, and, on the other hand, that *assimilation to the Divine* is the true intention and destiny of man. He thus prepares the way for the further idea or "main principle" of religion — revelation — which emerges as the complementary truth to God and immortality.

3. He proposed to consider the chief contents of revelation, or "those pieces of revealed truth which tend most of all to foment and cherish true and real piety." But he was only able to enter upon the preliminary aspect of the subject—the idea or mode of revelation—"*how, and in what manner, this kind of truth is manifested unto mankind.*" The

[1] Discourse V., c. iii. p. 148.

discourse upon "Prophecy" is all that survives to us of his more extended plan. It is full, however, of valuable thoughts, which go near to the heart of the whole subject. The following is a rapid summary of them.

Smith penetrates directly to the true idea of revelation as a "free influx of the divine mind upon our minds and understandings." All our primary and higher knowledge may in a sense be called revelation. It is a manifestation of truth to us through appropriate organs or faculties—of the truth of material things through our senses, and of the truth of higher spiritual things through our reason and conscience. The truth communicated in either way may very well be called "truth of revelation;" and in so far as we reach divine knowledge at any time through a direct and steady illumination of our spiritual faculties, we are all more or less prophets. The spiritual attitude always partakes more or less of prophetic enthusiasm. But revelation in a special sense implies the selection of a special race of prophets — of a class of minds peculiarly trained and qualified, not only to be the recipients of divine knowledge, but to be the organs of its communication to others. And this is exactly the aspect under which it is presented in Scripture.—"God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son."[1] The Scripture revelation is nothing else than the divine thought communicated to the succession of the

[1] Heb. i. 1, 2.

Hebrew prophets from Abraham to Christ, and through them imparted to the world. Prophecy and revelation are essentially correlative. The former is "the only way whereby this kind of truth can be dispensed to us."

Our author traces with interest, but also with too many involvements of rabbinical learning, the character and development of Hebrew prophecy. He points out how rational and imaginative elements united to form the prophetic spirit, and how diverse prophetic ranks are to be reckoned according to the degree in which these elements respectively combined. The imagination was the sphere in which the prophetic imagery arranged and pictured itself, while the reason is conceived as looking forth upon the scene and interpreting its spiritual meaning or "intelligible mysteries." The degree of prophetical illumination was in proportion to the predominance of the rational over the imaginative element; but only in one case was the former deemed to be exclusive, and the truth presented nakedly to the prophetic mind without the interposition of "any schemes or pictures." This was supposed to be the special privilege of Moses, founded on the statements that the Lord knew him "face to face,"[1] and spoke with him "mouth to mouth;"[2] and accordingly, Moses was placed by the Jewish doctors in a rank by himself, spoken of as the *gradus Mosaicus*. From this highest grade of the prophetic spirit, three descending grades were reckoned: one in which the rational power, although no longer exclusive, yet

[1] Deut. xxxiv. 10. [2] Num. xii. 8.

prevails, penetrating directly through the imaginative or material form to the naked essence of the truth; another less perfect, in which the imaginative and rational powers equally balance each other; and a third, lowest of all, in which the imaginative power predominates, "so that the impressions made upon it are too busy, and the scene becomes too turbulent for the rational faculty to discern the true mystical and anagogical sense of them clearly." "In this case the enthusiasms spend themselves extremely in parables, similitudes, and allegories, in a dark and obscure manner, as is very manifest in Zechariah's and many of Ezekiel's prophecies, as also those of Daniel."[1]

There are two ways in which the prophetic spirit was ordinarily conveyed—either in a dream or a vision.[2] The difference betwixt the two was in circumstantials rather than in anything essential—"as indeed there is no dream properly without a vision." A voice was more usually heard in the former; yet the Jews, our author says, were wont to make a vision superior to a dream, as "representing things more to the life," and more suddenly surprising and seizing the senses of the prophets. All dreams spoken of in Scripture as "sent by God" are by no means to be taken for prophetical. Many of them were merely "nouthetical or monitory;" and these were much weaker in their energy upon the imagination. They had nothing of the ecstatical rapture whereby the prophets in the moments of the divine afflatus were "snatched from themselves,"

[1] Discourse VI., p. 192.

[2] Num. xii. 6.

and made to realise the divine presence. A careful distinction is also to be made betwixt the real enthusiasm characteristic of the prophetic spirit, and mistaken enthusiasm. The latter is a mere play of imagination, or a vulgar assumption. It is never able to rise above the "low and dark region of sense," and the more obtrusive it is, the further it wanders from the truth. But the genuine prophetical enthusiasm, however intense, "never alienates the mind—seeing it seats itself as well in the rational as in the sensitive powers—but always maintains a consistency and clearness of reason, strength, and solidity of judgment, where it comes. It doth not ravish the mind, but inform and enlighten it."[1]

Our author discusses at length many other aspects of the subject, such as the ministration or agency of angels in the conduct of prophecy—the symbolic actions attributed to the prophets—the schools of the prophets—and, finally, their style as recorded in Scripture. On all these points, his views are characterised by largeness and depth of comprehension; but he runs into too many details, and borrows too much from the "Jewish doctors," for us to quote or even to summarise. He is at particular pains to explain how entirely "scenical and imaginary" many of the prophetic actions must be regarded as narrated in Hosea,[2] Jeremiah,[3] and Ezekiel.[4] What the prophets are represented as saying and doing in such cases is only to be supposed as said and done

[1] Discourse VI., c. iv. p. 211.
[2] Hos. i., iii.
[3] Jer. xiii., xviii.
[4] Ezek. iii., v.

in a vision. Their acts especially are not "really or sensibly performed, but only represented to the fancy." For we must remember "that the prophetical scene or stage upon which all apparitions were made to the prophet was his imagination; and that there all those things which God would have revealed unto him were acted over symbolically, as in a masque, in which diverse persons are brought in, amongst which the prophet himself bears a part: and therefore he, according to the exigency of this dramatical apparatus, must, as the other actors, perform his part." The same enlightenment and breadth of criticism characterise his remarks on the prophetic style, in which he everywhere sees the peculiar expression of the prophetic mind, and not any fixed or direct form of divine language. The idea of verbal inspiration appears to him wholly unnecessary to guarantee the accuracy of the prophetic representations. This was secured in the mere fact that they were men of knowledge who "could speak sense as wise men, and tell their own thoughts and experiences truly." "And indeed it seems most agreeable to the nature of all prophetical visions and dreams, wherein the nature of the enthusiasm consisted in a symbolical and hieroglyphical shaping forth of intelligible things in their imaginations, and enlightening the understanding of the prophets to discern the scope and meaning of these *visa* or *phantasmata*, that those words and phrases in which they were audibly expressed to the hearers afterwards, or penned down, should be the prophet's own; for the matter was not, as seems evident from

what has been said, represented always by words, but by things."

III. Smith's remaining discourses are occupied with various aspects of Christian truth; and, in so far as they have a common aim, may be said to unfold the distinctive character of Christianity as a living power of righteousness and sanctification in human life. The picture which he draws, both of the Gospel and its effects, is in the main correspondent to that drawn by Whichcote—with here and there a yet fuller insight and comprehension, greater wealth of spiritual allusion, and a deeper grasp, so to speak, of evangelical principles. Where Whichcote sketches rather the ethical and outwardly harmonious relations of the divine life, Smith gets more to the root and vitalising centre. His mind was both more creative in conception and more largely philosophic in survey. In speaking, for example, of legal and evangelical righteousness, he discriminates the latter on all sides thoroughly. It is not only spiritual instead of formal, according to the Jewish point of view, but it is a principle of life brought to the soul, and not any mere spontaneous growth out of it, or "new mould and shape in a pedagogical kind of way" in which the soul trains itself. It is, in short, a divine gift, and not any mere moral process. On the theological side Smith brings out more decisively than his teacher the distinctive divinity of Christianity; while on the other or practical side he emphasises with equal force the vital union of religion and morality. Divinely given, evangelical righteousness yet never merely lies alongside the soul, for-

mally imputed to it as an *addendum* securing its acceptance with God; but it "spreads itself over all the powers of the soul, quickening it into a divine life." It is not a "doctrine wrapt up in ink and paper, but a *vitalis scientia*, a living impression, made upon soul and spirit."[1] "The Gospel does not so much consist *in verbis* as *in virtute;* neither doth evangelical dispensation therefore please God so much more than the legal did, because, as a finer contrivance of His infinite understanding, it more clearly discovers the way of salvation to the minds of men; but chiefly because it is a more powerful efflux of His divine goodness upon them, as being the true seed of a happy immortality continually thriving and growing on to perfection. It does not hold forth such a transcendent privilege and advantage above what the law did, only because it acquaints us that Christ, our true High Priest, is ascended up into the holy of holies, and there, instead of the blood of bulls and goats, hath sprinkled the ark and mercy-seat above with His own blood; but also because it conveys that blood of sprinkling into our defiled consciences, to purge them from dead works. Far be it from me to disparage in the least the merit of Christ's blood, His becoming obedient unto death, whereby we are justified. But I doubt sometimes some of our dogmata and notions about justification may puff us up in far higher and goodlier conceits of ourselves than God hath of us; and that we profanely make the unspotted righteousness of Christ to serve only as a covering wherein to wrap up our

[1] Discourse VII., c. iv. p. 349.

foul deformities and filthy vices; and when we have done, think ourselves in as good credit and repute with God as we are with ourselves, and that we are become heaven's darlings as much as we are our own."[1]

Again: "By so much the more acceptable any one is to God, by how much the more he comes to resemble God. It was a common notion in the old Pythagorean and Platonic theology,[2] that the divinity transformed into love, and enamoured with its own unlimited perfections and spotless beauty, delighted to copy forth and shadow out itself as it were in created beings, which are perpetually embraced in the warm bosom of the same love, from which they can never swerve nor apostatise till they also prove apostate to the estate of their creation. And certainly it is true in our Christian divinity, that that divine light and goodness which flows forth from God, the original of all, upon the souls of men, never goes solitary and destitute of love, complacency, and acceptation, which is always lodged together with it in the divine essence. And as the divine complacency thus dearly and tenderly entertains all those which bear a similitude of true goodness upon them, so it always abandons from its embraces all evil, which never doth nor can mix itself with it. The Holy Spirit can never suffer any unhallowed or defiled thing to enter into it, or to unite itself with it. Therefore, in a sober sense, I hope I may truly say, there is no perfect reconciliation wrought between

[1] Discourse VII., c. iv. p. 350.

[2] "Τὸν Δία μετασχηματισθέντα εἰς τὸν ἔρωτα, &c., as Proclus phraseth it." Smith adds this in the text.

God and the souls of men while any defiled and impure thing dwells within the soul, which cannot truly close with God, nor God with that."[1]

Unpolemical as Smith is in a polemical age—dwelling for the most part in a region of religious meditation far above the strife of tongues—it is yet evident here and there, in the larger movement of his thoughts, that he is striking at prevalent bigotries and dogmatic pretensions unwelcome to his school; as in the passage already quoted about justification, and in other passages such as the following: "It is not because our brains swim with a strong conceit of God's eternal love to us, or because we grow big and swell into a mighty bulk with airy fancies and presumptions of our acceptance with God, that makes us the more acceptable to Him: it is not all our strong dreams of being in favour with heaven that fills our hungry souls the more with it: it is not a pertinacious imagination of our names being enrolled in the book of life, or of the debt-books of heaven being crossed, or of Christ being ours, while we find Him not living within us, or of the washing away of our sins in His blood, while the foul and filthy stains thereof are deeply sunk in our own souls. . . . No, it must be a true compliance with the divine will, which must render us such as the Divinity may take pleasure in. 'In Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision availeth anything,' nor any fancy built upon any other external privilege, 'but the keeping of the commandments of God.'"[2]

[1] Discourse VII., c. v. p. 352, 353. [2] Ibid., p. 354.

"We have learned to distinguish too subtily, I doubt, in our lives and conversations *inter sacrum et profanum*, our religious approaches to God and our worldly affairs. . . . We must not think that religion serves to paint our faces, to reform our looks, or only to inform our heads, or instruct and tune our tongues; no, not only to tie our hands, and make our outward man more demure, and bring our bodies and bodily actions into a better decorum; but its main business is to purge and reform our hearts, and all the illicit actions and motions thereof."[1]

"There are such who persuade themselves they are well affected to God, yet they can sometimes beat down the price of other men's religion to enhance the value of their own; or it may be by a burning and fiery zeal against the opinions and deportments of others that are not of their own sect, they lose the sense of all their own guiltiness. . . . A religion that runs out only in particularities is but a dead carcase, and not indeed that true living religion which comes down from heaven."[2]

We have now presented nearly all that is characteristic in the substance and mode of Smith's religious thought; yet many passages remain in these concluding discourses, eloquent with such a high and pregnant meaning, that we have difficulty in omitting them. The following, however, must sum up our quotations: "It is a fond imagination that religion should extinguish reason, whereas religion makes it more illustrious and vigorous; and they

[1] Discourse VIII., c. iii. p. 389, 390. [2] Ibid., c. ii. p. 383, 385.

that live most in the exercise of religion shall find their reason most enlarged."[1]

"True religion is no piece of artifice; it is no boiling up of our imaginative powers, nor the glowing heats of passion; though these are too often mistaken for it, when in our jugglings in religion we cast a mist before our own eyes: but it is a new nature informing the souls of men; it is a godlike frame of spirit, discovering itself most of all in serene and clear minds, in deep humility, meekness, self-denial, universal love of God, and all true goodness, without partiality and without hypocrisy; whereby we are taught to know God, and knowing Him to love Him, and conform ourselves, as much as may be, to all that perfection which shines forth in Him."[2]

"True religion never finds itself out of the infinite sphere of the Divinity; and wherever it finds beauty, harmony, goodness, love, ingenuity, wisdom, holiness, justice, and the like, it is ready to say, here and there is God: wheresoever any such perfections shine out, a holy mind climbs up by these sunbeams, and raises itself up to God."[3]

"Religion is no such austere, sour, and rigid thing, as to affright men away from it: no, but those that are acquainted with the power of it, find it to be altogether sweet and amiable. . . . It is no sullen Stoicism—no sour Pharisaism; it does not consist in a few melancholy passions, in some dejected looks or depressions of mind: but it consists

[1] Discourse IX., c. ii. p. 417. [2] Discourse VIII., c. v. p. 401, 402.
[3] Discourse IX., c. viii. p. 467.

in freedom, love, peace, life, and power; the more it comes to be digested into our lives, the more sweet and lovely we shall find it to be."[1]

Enough has been presented to show how solid, fine, and rich a thinker Smith is. Of all the products of the Cambridge School, the 'Select Discourses' are perhaps the highest, as they are the most accessible and the most widely appreciated. Many for whom the other members of the Platonic group possess comparatively little interest, and who have barely heard of Smith's teacher, Whichcote, have read with admiration these Discourses. And indeed no spiritually thoughtful mind can read them unmoved. They carry us so directly into an atmosphere of divine philosophy, luminous with the richest lights of meditative genius. Philosophic elevation is their pervading characteristic. We see a mind religious to the core—tremulous in its inmost cords with pious aspiration—not only free from all pietistic weakness and dogmatic narrowness, but poising itself naturally at an altitude out of sight of them. Smith is not only no controversialist, but the dust of controversy has never touched him. His mind bears no scores of party conflict, but is fresh as a new-born life, with open eyes of poetic wonder and divine speculation. He has not painfully reached the serene heights on which his thoughts dwell; but these heights are the natural level of his lofty and abounding spiritual nature.

This elevation marks in our author both a certain

[1] Discourse IX., c. ii. p. 486, 487.

intellectual and spiritual advance. The breadth and freedom of mind which we traced in Whichcote still lies, in some degree, on a polemical and scholastic background. He has worked himself out of technical subtleties, and obtained a firm, rational footing; but many of the trappings of the scholastic spirit still clung to him, as his correspondence with Tuckney plainly shows. He made a clear advance upon the theological spirit of his age, having pushed the lines of his religious thought manfully forward, till they touched all the diverse aspects of speculative and moral culture. He thus redeemed religion from the dogmatism and faction which were alike preying upon it, and taught men to see in it something higher than any mere profession of opinions or attachment to a side. He well conceived and drew its ideal as the spiritual education of all our faculties. But this, which may be said to form the summit of Whichcote's thought, attained through meditative struggle and prolonged converse with Platonic speculation, was the starting-point of Smith. He began easily on this level, and never needed to work out for himself the rational conception of religion. Religion was inconceivable to him under any other form than the idealisation and crown of our spiritual nature. The Divine represented to him from the first the complement of the Human—the perfect orb which rounds and completes all its aspirations and activities. The assimilation of man to God was consequently the one comprehensive function of Christianity; and whatever contributes to this spiritual transformation, is more or less of the nature of

religion. Wherever there is, as he says, "beauty, harmony, goodness, love, ingenuity, wisdom, holiness, justice, and the like,—*there is God.*"

But Smith did more than merely develop this comprehensive ideal of religion. He not only moralised and broadened the conception of the Divine, but he entered directly into its whole meaning, and inquired what it was as a phase of human knowledge as well as of human attainment. That religion cannot be separated from reason, nor morals from piety, was of the nature of an axiomatic truth to him. His special thought was, how does reason authenticate religion, and the divine idea in its totality rise into a valid element of human knowledge? He was, in short, from the beginning, and by right of mental birth, a Christian philosopher. Divinity presented itself to him in the shape of a science. Even if the answers given by him to the questions which he thus raised had been less satisfactory than they are, it was yet a definite advance in the thought of the seventeenth century to ask such questions—to conceive the idea of a philosophy of the Divine. Theology had been hitherto viewed as a product of the schools, or, at the best, as a series of deductions drawn from a supposed infallible oracle. It was tradition, or dogma, resting on a verbal basis. And Smith, no doubt, had been taught it as a system of inherited formulæ ready to hand for the solution of all questions. But whatever traditionary impressions had thus been made upon him had sunk into the large depths of his spiritual nature, and become merely food for its

richer nurture, rather than left any formal trace behind. The great ideas of Theology were taken up by him from the first as vital elements within the sphere of the soul itself. Whatever they are, he felt that they must have a real conformity to man's higher reason and life; and that the only valid science of them is to be sought in the ascertainment of this conformity. A science of the Divine may embrace many things—elements of communicated and derived, as well as of primary knowledge; but its basis must lie on the primary affirmations of the soul, and all its structure be traced back to the great question of man's essential character in the scale of being. What then is this? Is man essentially a spiritual being? And if so, what are the true contents of his spiritual reason or consciousness? These —the eternal problems of religious philosophy— were the problems to which Smith directly addressed himself with clear-sighted and admirable perspicacity.

And his answers, upon the whole, go as nearly to the heart of their solution as any that have been given. He vindicated the distinctive reality of the human soul with clear effect, if not with any special resources of argument. All arguments on such a subject, from those of the Phaedo downwards, are, indeed, more or less of the same nature; and it may be safely said that no man, not already convinced, is likely to be convinced by them. Smith's argumentative details are not more conclusive than others. But he unfolds all the spiritual qualities of humanity with such a rich depth of insight, that we feel, as it

were, the fact of the soul to realise itself before us. The sense of the Divine grows quick within us at the touch of his living analysis; and it witnesses itself, not as the result of any elaborate inference, but as the primary being *which we are*—the original ground of all our life. And this is really the most that any thinker can accomplish on the subject. For the question of spirit *versus* matter—of immortality *versus* epicureanism—comes in the end to a rational assumption on the one side or the other. We must start spiritualist or materialist—from within or from without. Or we may start from the meeting-point of both—the eternal doubleness which seems to lie at the basis of being. The one cannot be logically deduced from the other, but the one may be found in the other; an essential antithesis—subject-object—with the subjective or spiritual side in front. And the thinker who brings out most vividly, and helps us to understand most fully, this spiritual side of human thought and life, does most, after all, to attest its reality.

The manner in which Smith attaches the belief in God to the belief in immortality was also a special service rendered to the cause of religious philosophy. He saw clearly what has since his time been so often declared authoritatively by the highest thinkers, that the only basis for the recognition of the Divine in the world was the recognition of the spiritual in man. Both the fact and the character of Deity must be primarily read in the human soul; and, without "this interpreter within," all life and nature

would be really void to us of divine meaning. If we do not find God within ourselves, "the whole fabric of the visible universe may whisper to us of Him," but the whisper will be unintelligible, for—

> "We receive but what we give,
> And in our life alone does Nature live."

All questions concerning God and religion thus really cluster round one root—the root of an original divine principle in man. Revelation itself is nothing else than the historical illumination of this fontal source of the Divine; while practical religion is its growth or development on the volitional and moral side. Smith saw all this plainly and expounded it luminously. He saw also, what perhaps Whichcote has not made so apparent, that the Divine, while thus linked to human reason, and finding its first and essential utterance in it, is yet as a living power something which human nature itself could never elaborate. No mere philosophy or moralism can ever transmute itself into evangelical righteousness. This has its rise within the heart, no doubt, but not as a spontaneous product. It can only come from the original fount of Divinity—a new divine force within us springing up into eternal life.

While Smith therefore broadened, and in a sense humanised, the conception of religion, he at the same time, with admirable balance of mind, vindicated it as a distinctive divine power revealed in man—a righteousness not self-evolved, but divinely given "through the faith of Christ, the righteousness

which is of God by faith."[1] He was one of those rare thinkers in whom largeness of view, and depth, and wealth of poetic and speculative insight, only served to evoke more fully the religious spirit; and while he drew the mould of his thought from Plotinus, he vivified the substance of it from St Paul.

[1] Phil. iii. 9.

IV.

RALPH CUDWORTH—CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHY IN CONFLICT WITH MATERIALISM.

I. CUDWORTH is the most celebrated of the Cambridge school, and at the same time its most systematic and formal writer. The movement takes in him its most elaborate and complete expression. He was born a year before John Smith, and entered Emmanuel College a few years earlier. The son of a clergyman of some distinction and learning, he enjoyed advantages which the son of a "small farmer" in Northamptonshire could scarcely have done, and had thus the start of his contemporary at the university and all along his academic course. He attained his Master's degree five years earlier, and immediately after became fellow and tutor of his college, with a large circle of pupils, as many as eight-and-twenty—"an instance scarce ever known before even in the largest colleges of the university."[1] It is very probable, therefore, that Smith was one of Cudworth's pupils, although the

[1] An Account of the Life and Writings of Ralph Cudworth, D.D., by Thomas Birch, M.A., F.R.S. To this very fragmentary and imperfect account, commonly prefixed to the editions of Cudworth's 'Intellectual System,' &c., we are indebted for almost all we know of his life.

fact is not mentioned in any scanty notices we have of the life of either. Between them may be traced not merely the common type of mind belonging to the members of the school, but certain special affinities and ways of looking at the religious questions of their time. This is especially true of the earlier and more generalised phase of Cudworth's thought, which may be said to represent the period of his connection with Emmanuel College. A special bond of association between these illustrious students is all the more likely when we remember that Whichcote, the lifelong friend of Cudworth, was the patron and friend of the young student from Northamptonshire.

Ralph Cudworth was born at Aller, in Somersetshire, in 1617. His father, like himself, had been bred at Emmanuel College, and afterwards became minister of St Andrew's Church in Cambridge. He was finally rector of Aller, and appears to have died young. His widow, whose family name was Machell, and who had been nurse to Prince Henry, eldest son of King James, married a second time Dr Stoughton, who educated his son-in-law, the subject of our notice, with great care. To this careful training he owed his early advantages and the rapid progress which he made at Cambridge. When admitted in 1630 a pensioner in Emmanuel College he was only thirteen years of age, and his father-in-law gave him "this testimony, that he was as well grounded in school learning as any boy of his age that went to the university."[1] Entered thus early on the books of Emmanuel, he did not matriculate till two years

[1] Birch.

afterwards—in 1632—when he commenced his academic career with great enthusiasm, and "applied himself to all parts of literature with such vigour" that he became Master of Arts at the age of twenty-two "with great applause."[1] His distinguished career as a tutor immediately followed. Among his pupils was the well-known Sir William Temple, whose subsequent reputation as an ambassador, politician, and writer, has impressed this fact upon his biographer. There is no evidence, however, that Temple was any credit to his tutor. On the contrary, his university course seems to have been rather idle, and he left Cambridge after two years without taking a degree. While tutor in his college, Cudworth was presented to the rectory of North Cadbury, in Somersetshire. This living was in the gift of Emmanuel College, and we find Whichcote presented to it in 1643. Cudworth appears to have been his immediate predecessor for about two years. He is said to have been appointed in 1641; but there is some doubt whether he ever left the university and settled in the country.

His first authorship belongs to this period. In 1642 he published 'A Discourse concerning the true nature of the Lord's Supper.' It does not appear whether this discourse was ever delivered. It could scarcely have been a sermon, from the elaborate and highly scholastic manner in which it is constructed. It is composed of an introduction and six chapters, in which the author expounds, with learned discursiveness, the relation of the Lord's Supper to the

[1] Birch.

sacrificial customs of the Jews and heathens, and tries to discriminate its true meaning as illustrated by these customs. Like most of his subsequent writings, it is overlaid by masses of rabbinical, patristic, and classical quotation, which often carry him away from the subject instead of serving to explain it. Bochart, Spencer,[1] and Selden are said to have greatly admired it; and Warburton, "my most ingenious and learned friend," says Birch, styled it in a letter to him "a masterpiece of its kind." It was published, along with another kindred production of his pen at this time, with only his initials, R. C.

The idea or true notion of the Lord's Supper, according to Cudworth, is that it is a *Feast upon sacrifice*—an *Epulum sacrificiale* or *Epulum ex oblatis*, analogous to the feasts which followed upon the

[1] Spencer was devoted to the same kind of erudition. He was the author of a once celebrated work, 'De legibus Hebræorum ritualibus et earum rationibus, libri tres.' Like Cudworth, he was educated at Cambridge (1645-1655), and was for a brief space Master of Corpus, in the chapel of which he is interred. He was afterwards Dean of Ely.

Sir William Hamilton (Note A., ed. of Reid, p. 782) mentions Spencer along with Smith, Cudworth, More, and Taylor (?) as forming "the illustrious and congenial band by which the University of Cambridge was illustrated during the last half of the seventeenth century." Spencer's breadth of mind, displayed in his conduct to the Nonconformists after the Restoration, as well as in many of his rational explanations of the Jewish rites and customs, entitle him to be remembered in connection with the Cambridge school. But he does not seem to have entered much, if at all, into its philosophical aims; and his writings are now forgotten. Taylor had no connection with Cambridge in the latter part of the seventeenth century, nor, apparently, after leaving it, so early as 1636.

Bochart was a Protestant pastor at Caen, where he died suddenly in 1667. His extensive erudition in Biblical antiquities, geography, and natural history, was the wonder of his age.

legal sacrifices among the Jews. The legal sacrifices, being only types and shadows, were often "repeated and renewed, as well as the feasts which were made upon them; but now the true Christian Sacrifice being come, and offered up once for all never to be repeated, we have therefore no more typical sacrifices left among us, but only the feasts upon the true Sacrifice still symbolically continued, and often repeated, in reference to that *one great Sacrifice*, which is always as present in God's sight, and efficacious, as if it were but now offered up for us." In this view he sees a solution of the controversy as to whether the Lord's Supper itself be a sacrifice. It is not *sacrificium*, but, in Tertullian's language, *participatio sacrificii*; "not the offering of something up to God upon an altar, but the eating of something which comes from God's altar, and is set upon our tables." This is the key to the apostle's meaning in the passage, 1 Cor. x. 21,—"Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of devils; ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table and of the table of devils." The things which the Gentiles sacrificed, they sacrificed to devils; and so the feasts which followed were called the feasts of devils, and to share in those feasts was really to be partakers of the idol sacrifices. No Christian could consistently join in those feasts. In like manner, they who partook of the legal sacrifices were sharers of those sacrifices. It is the same analogy which gives us the true explanation of the Lord's Supper. They who join in it participate in the sacrifice of the cross. The rite itself is not sacrificial; but it derives all its

special meaning and virtue from the great Sacrifice which it commemorates. The communion-table is not an altar, but it points back to one. It is wrong to call it an altar, because this implies a place upon which God Himself, so to speak, "eats, consuming the sacrifice by His holy fire;" whereas the true idea is, that God in the Holy Supper gives us meat to eat of. In short, there may be said to be "a sacrifice in the Lord's Supper symbolically, but not there as offered up to God, but feasted on by us; and so not a sacrifice but a sacrificial feast; which began too soon to be misunderstood."

This bare abstract of Cudworth's argument is sufficient to show the breadth and compass both of his religious and philosophical conceptions at this early age. He was as yet only twenty-three. It indicates, moreover, his capacity of carrying controversy back to its first principles, and disentangling the truth and error generally to be found on both sides of a great question. This eclectic healthfulness of spirit is particularly noticeable in the introduction. The Discourse itself, and the profusion of erudite illustrations from Maimonides, Kimchi, and other Jewish writers, which illustrate it, are more like his time and a theological manner which was beginning to disappear. The following may be taken as a specimen of its higher thoughtfulness.

"All great errors have ever been intermingled with some truth. And indeed, if falsehood should appear alone into the world, in her own true shape and native deformity, she would be so black and horrid that no man would look upon her; and therefore she hath always had an art to wrap up herself in a

garment of light, by which means she passed freely disguised and undiscerned. This was elegantly signified in the fable thus : Truth at first presented herself to the world, and went about to seek entertainment; but when she found none, being of a generous nature, that loves not to obtrude herself upon unworthy spirits, she resolved to leave earth, and take her flight for heaven : but as she was going up, she chanced, Elijah-like, to let her mantle fall; and Falsehood, waiting by for such an opportunity, snatched it up presently, and ever since goes about disguised in Truth's attire. Pure falsehood is pure nonentity, and could not subsist alone by itself; therefore it always twines up together about some truth, as Athenagoras, the Christian philosopher, speaks, like an ivy that grows upon some wall,[1] twining herself into it with wanton and flattering embraces, till it have at length destroyed and pulled down that which held it up. There is always some truth which gives being to every error. 'There is ever some soul of truth, which doth secretly spirit and enliven the dead and unwieldy lump of all errors, without which it could not move or stir.'[2] Though sometimes it would require a very curious artist, in the midst of all Error's deformities to descry the defaced lineaments of that Truth which first it did resemble."

There is the same mixture of learning and thoughtfulness in the other publication which belongs to this period of Cudworth's life, with less substance, however, in the thought, and more irrelevancy in

[1] Παραφυάδος εἰκός.

[2] *Est quædam veritatis anima, quæ corpus omnium errorum agitat et informat.*

the erudition. It is entitled, 'The Union of Christ and the Church; in a Shadow,'—and may have been originally a sermon. As in the former production his aim is to vindicate the true idea of sacrifice in relation to the Lord's Supper, so here it is his aim to restore what he believes to be an important truth from the corruptions with which the Romanists had overlaid it. In the eagerness with which men pass from one extreme to another, the Protestants appear to him to have lost sight of the higher meaning of marriage—"that *mystical notion* which is contained in it." Quoting St Paul,[1] he argues that the apostle plainly regards the union of man and wife as not only a "bare similitude" of the mystical union of Christ and His Church, in the same manner as the grain of mustard-seed, for example, in the Gospels, is a similitude of the kingdom of heaven. The apostle's thought, and the true thought, is deeper than this. "He makes one to be a real type of the other, and the other an archetypal copy, according to which that was limned and drawn out. As the Platonists use to say concerning spiritual and material things, 'That material things are but ectypal resemblances and imitations of spiritual things, which were the first, primitive, and archetypal beings.'"[2] And following out this Platonic conception, he conceives that "God having framed that excellent plot of the Gospel, and therein continued the mystical union between Christ and the Church, delighted to draw some shadowings and adumbrations of it here below, and left the seal of that truth upon these material things, that so it

[1] Eph. v. 22, 33.

[2] Τὰ αἰσθητὰ τοῦ νοητοῦ μιμήματα.

might print the same stamp and idea, though upon baser matter." Hence, according to him, the institution of man and wife, wherein we see, not only an accidental likeness, but a true picture of the relation between Christ and His Church. The lower relation not merely serves to illustrate the higher, but is its divinely constituted image or copy; Christ and the Church being *sponsus et sponsa archetypi*, man and wife being *sponsus et sponsa ectypi*. He expounds this thought under several heads, and heaps around it a multiplicity of quotations from diverse mystical authorities, amongst others from the "masters of the Cabala"—"a kind of secret and mystical divinity," he says, "remaining in part yet amongst the Jews." It is unnecessary to follow his details, curious as some of them are. They add little or nothing to the sum of his thought expressed in the opening of the tract, much as they serve to show the unusual range of his speculation and reading.

Even at this early age Cudworth had evidently mastered all the main sources of philosophy, mediæval as well as classical. Like Smith, he quotes freely, not only from the Neo-Platonists and the Jewish schools, but also from such modern revivers of the Platonic spirit as Pico of Mirandola and Ludovicus Vives.[1] His own thought is in fact buried amidst the mass of philosophical antiquarian-

[1] Juan Luis, commonly called Ludovicus Vives, was born at Valencia 1492. He was an intimate friend of Erasmus, and spent a considerable portion of his life as his friend did, in England in the reign of Henry VIII. He was the author of various philosophical works, all more or less directed against the Scholastic Philosophy, which attracted much attention in their day.

ism in which he sets it. He draws at will from the most various and recondite authorities. We are pleased also to light upon an allusion to Bacon, "our late noble Viscount of St Albans," showing that the most recent, no less than the most ancient, philosophical writings were known to so omnivorous a student. In all there is observed an ardent mind insatiably in search of higher knowledge—marvellously elevated and powerful in its range, but moving along a transcendental road apt to terminate in cloudland. We see, in short, something of the strength and weakness of the school in its infancy; its spiritual rationality verging on fantastic mysticism; its noble culture, with its uncritical and clumsy deference to authority.

The subjects handled in both these early tracts are directly religious; but it is their philosophical more than their religious tendency which interests us. Rather it is the manner in which they apply a philosophical spirit to religious questions. From the first Cudworth is more or less of a religious philosopher. His mind instinctively seeks the root of religion and morality—their ultimate basis in the laws and principles of human nature. There is some reason for thinking that already, before he had quitted the shades of Emmanuel as tutor, he had turned his attention to the great topics which were afterwards so much to occupy him. This may be inferred from the theses he maintained two years later (1644), on taking his degree of bachelor of divinity, in which he discussed the nature of good and evil and the existence of incor-

poreal substances.[1] The natural affinity of his mind was towards such discussions, and they may have been the fruit of his own reflectiveness in those studious years. But they may have also been suggested by signs which his eager thoughtfulness discerned in the philosophical atmosphere. Hobbes had printed his 'Elementa Philosophica de Cive' at Paris in 1642; and a stray copy may have reached Cambridge. So inquisitive and philosophically sensitive a mind as Cudworth's would readily catch any breath of new philosophy, especially of a character so alien as that of Hobbes, and so opposed to his deepest convictions.

In the same year in which he took his degree of bachelor of divinity, Cudworth was appointed master of Clare Hall by the Parliamentary Visitors in the room of Dr Paske, whom they had ejected. The Puritan authorities confided in Cudworth as they did in Whichcote, on what precise grounds it would be difficult to say. He had certainly not been active as a religious partisan. His theological spirit was very unlike that of the Westminster Assembly. But along with Whichcote he had been bred at Emmanuel, and to have been a student there seems to have formed a sufficient passport to promotion in the eyes of Parliament. It is not said that Cudworth, like his friend, had any scruples in accepting

[1] See page 29. These theses in *Latin verse* are found printed in a pamphlet on 'Free Will,' published from Cudworth's MSS. in 1837. They are there dated not 1644 but 1651, when he took his degree of doctor of divinity. Can he have discussed the same subjects twice over? Birch's affirmation is positive in favour of the former date.

the enforced vacancy. He moves amongst all the contentions of his time with a singular freedom of conscience; and, in turn, all its changes seem to have dealt gently with him. While Whichcote at the Restoration was compelled to retire from the university by special command of the king, he remained in quiet possession of his post. The comparatively active character of the former as a leader of opinion may account for this; or it may have been that Cudworth was protected by some special influence. He was shortly afterwards presented by Sheldon to a living. Yet during all the time of the Commonwealth he was in some respects peculiarly associated with Cromwell and his friends.

In the year succeeding his appointment to Clare Hall, he was further made Regius Professor of Hebrew, and from this time he is said to have chiefly given himself to academical work. He had an especial knowledge of Jewish literature, and great interest in Jewish antiquities. The duties of such a position were therefore thoroughly congenial to him. He lectured or "read every Wednesday"[1]— his subject being the Temple of Jerusalem. Worthington, who communicates this information, was himself an adept at such studies; and when Cudworth was obliged to be absent he seems to have taken his place as Professor of Hebrew, and lectured in his stead.[2]

[1] MS. letter quoted by Birch.

[2] "Feb. 13, 165½, Feb. 20-27. I read Hebrew lectures in the schools for Dr Cudworth." Diary and Correspondence of Dr Worthington, Master of Jesus College, Cambridge, &c., printed for the Chetham Society, chiefly from the Baker MSS. in the British Museum, under the editorship

But while thus mainly occupied with his duties as a teacher in the university, he does not seem to have abandoned, as Birch says he did, "the functions of a minister." He may no longer have had any duty as a preacher; yet it was two years after his appointment as Professor that he preached his great sermon before the House of Commons. We shall afterwards examine this sermon, which is one of the most remarkable productions of Cudworth's genius, and along with the companion sermon which follows out the subject, by far his finest composition. If he had never written anything else, these sermons would have given him a position among our rational theologians. Their strain could hardly have been relished by the leaders, either of the army or of the Presbyterian majority in Parliament, then pausing in face of one another, jealous and uncertain as to their real movements. But it is not the less, but all the more, noble on that account; and the picture of catholic Christianity which he draws was not without its effect on the greatest minds that listened to him.

He continued in these academical functions for ten years, but apparently not without distraction. "Though the places which he held in the university were very honourable," says Birch, "yet he found the revenue of them not sufficient to support him." This is a curious statement, and illustrates either the singular poverty of two im-

of James Crossley, Esq. Mr Crossley is an enthusiastic admirer of the Cambridge divines, and his notes are full of valuable matter regarding them.

portant positions in the University of Cambridge, or some tendency to unreasonable extravagance in their occupant. The latter seems an unlikely supposition. The true explanation, in the light of what follows, probably is, that while as master of Clare Hall and Professor of Hebrew, Cudworth may have had enough to support him as a bachelor, he had not enough to enable him to marry and settle with comfort. He evidently desired to do this, and even contemplated leaving the university—an event spoken of with apprehension by Worthington in his letters.[1] Apparently he had left for a time, but whether to undertake any duty elsewhere is not stated. The misfortune of his academical loss was averted by the mastership of Christ's College becoming vacant in 1654, and Cudworth's appointment to the succession. "After many tossings," says Worthington, "Dr Cudworth is, through God's providence, returned to Cambridge, and settled in Christ's College, and by his marriage more settled and fixed." Of his wife we learn nothing. Neither Birch nor Worthington tells us anything; but we shall afterwards hear of one of his daughters, illustrious in herself, and as the special friend of Locke. Three years previous to his marriage and settlement in Christ's College, Cudworth had taken his degree of doctor of divinity.

There is little to be told of his life from this

[1] Jan. 1651. "If through want of maintenance he (R. C.) should be forced to leave Cambridge, for which place he is so eminently accomplished with what is noble and exemplarily academical, it would be an ill omen."

period till the Restoration. His mind was fully occupied in the work of his college, and of the Hebrew Chair which he continued to hold, and also in the quiet satisfactions of domestic life. Occasionally we catch a glimpse of him in connection with the outward political world. In the year 1657 there appears to have been an intention to submit what is known as the authorised version of Scripture, issued in the reign of James, to further revision and correction. The business was intrusted to the Lord Commissioner Whitelocke and a "grand Committee" of Parliament. This Committee in turn nominated a sub-committee to send for and advise with certain divines, amongst whom we find the names of Walton and Cudworth, as to the several "translations and impressions of the Bible." The Committee, Whitelocke himself tells us, often held their conferences with these and the other "most learned men in the Oriental tongues" at his house. "Diverse, excellent, and learned observations" were made as to some mistakes in the authorised version; "which yet was agreed to be the best of any translation in the world." "I took pains in it," he adds, "but it became fruitless by the Parliament's dissolution." It may well be doubted whether the time was favourable for meddling with King James's version, or whether Cudworth and Walton, with all their learning, were men to whom it would have been safe to intrust any remodelling of its grand English.

Cudworth's appointment to consult with the Committee of the House of Commons on this important

subject is a sufficient evidence of his connection with the party in power. But there are indications of closer and more confidential intercourse betwixt him and the Commonwealth authorities. John Thurloe was Secretary of State both for Cromwell and his son Richard. He was a busy, earnest man, devoted to the great Protector and the interests of his Government. He had a keen eye for ability in all the services of the State, like his master; and is said afterwards to have refused Charles II.'s office of employment on the plea that he despaired of serving him as he had served Cromwell, "whose rule was to seek out men for places, and not places for men." Thurloe and Cudworth were confidential correspondents. In reply to an application as to men belonging to the university fitted for political and civil employment, we have a long reply from Cudworth[1]—a second letter unavoidably delayed, he says—in which he recommends various persons to Thurloe's notice, as fitted for political and civil employments; among others, Mr George Rust, a fellow of his college, of whom we have already heard in connection with Taylor,[2] and who will come before us again. He is described in the letter to Thurloe as "an understanding, pious, discreet man, of exceeding good parts, and a generall scholar, but one that seems not so willing to divert himselfe from preaching and divinity, which he hath of late intended; otherwise his parts are such as would enable him for any

[1] The reply is without date in Birch's Account, &c.
[2] See p. 350, 351, vol. i.

employment." On another occasion Cudworth is found recommending to the Secretary of State, as chaplain to the English merchants at Lisbon, Mr Zachary Cradock, "afterwards provost of Eton College, and famous for his uncommon learning and abilities as a preacher."*

Such communications betoken cordial relations betwixt Cudworth and the Commonwealth government. In themselves they may not come to much; but they mean more than at first they seem to do. For to Cromwell and his officials the appointment of a Protestant chaplain to the English residents at Lisbon was a serious affair, with some international significance. How far our divine came in contact with the great Protector himself there is no means of clearly determining. But the language of a subsequent letter to Thurloe, written in the beginning of 1659, after the accession of Richard, leaves it to be inferred that Cromwell had personally known and appreciated him. The letter has a special interest in reference to the writer's literary employments. "Now I have this opportunity I shall use the freedom to acquaint you with another business. I am persuaded by friends to publish some discourses which I have prepared in Latine, that will be of a polemicall nature, in defence of Christianity against Judaisme, explaining some chief places of Scripture, controverted between the Jewes and us (as Daniel's prophecy of the Seventy Weekes, never yet sufficiently cleared and improved), and withall, extricating many difficulties of chronologie. Which taske I the rather under-

take, not onely because it is suitable to my Hebrew profession, and because I have lighted on some Jewish writings upon the argument as have scarcely been ever seen by any Christians, which would the beter enable me fully to confute them; but also because I conceive it a worke proper and suitable to this present age. However, though I should not be able myselfe to be any way instrumental to these great transactions of Providence (not without cause hoped for of many) amongst the Jews; yet I perswade myselfe my pains may not be alltogether unprofitable for the setting and establishing of Christians; or, at least, I shall give an account of my spending such vacant hours as I could redeeme from my preaching and other occasions, and the perpetual distractions of the bursarship, which the statutes of this colledge impose upon me. It was my purpose to dedicate these fruits of my studies to his Highnes (to whose noble father I was much obliged), if I may have leave, or presume so to doe; which I cannot better understand by any than yourselfe, if you shall think it convenient, when you have an opportunity to insinuate any such thing, which I permitte wholly to your prudence. I intend, God willing, to be in London some time in March; and then I shall waite upon you to receve your information."

The Discourse concerning Daniel's prophecy of the Seventy Weeks, mentioned in this letter as ready for publication, was never published. It is said still to exist in manuscript. It is highly commended by Dr Henry More in his preface to his explanation of the "Grand Mystery of Godliness," published in

1660. According to his statement, it was read in the public schools of the university with great applause and admiration—demonstrating to the satisfaction of the hearers and the confusion of Joseph Scaliger, whose "over-great opinion" had too long misled the world, that the manifestation of the Messiah had "fallen out at the end of the sixty-ninth week, and His passion in the midst of the last in the most proper and natural sense thereof;" "which demonstration," adds Cudworth's admiring friend, "is of as much price and worth in theology, as either the circulation of the blood in physic, or the motion of the earth in natural philosophy." Such panegyric is unhappily its own refutation. It is somewhat difficult now to understand it, and the fascination which such subjects had for men like Cudworth and More. The higher speculations which already had interested our author, were certainly ill exchanged for the composition of a polemical treatise against the Jews as to the interpretation of Daniel's prophecy. But such prophetical studies, it is to be remembered, were directly suggested by his Hebrew professorship, and those Jewish antiquarian researches which so powerfully attracted him. They were, moreover, intensely exciting to his age, and even, thirty years later, to Newton and his age. It is curious to reflect that the only bond of connection between these two great names should be across the barren line of studies, which most wise men have now agreed to set aside. In writing to Locke, in the beginning of 1691, Newton explains his idea of the apocalyptic vision in Daniel (c. vii.) as identical with that of St John

(Rev. xii.); and in the same letter sends his "service" to Mrs Cudworth, then resident with her daughter, Lady Masham, with whom the author of the 'Essay on the Human Understanding' was at the same time domiciled, and continued to be so till the close of his life in 1703. Cudworth, Newton, and Locke, all concentrating their interest upon a literal interpretation of an obscure vision in Daniel, is a phenomenon hardly intelligible to our age, and the new eyes with which it has learned to look upon Scripture and interpret its prophetical mysteries.

The Restoration left Cudworth in undisturbed possession of his academical position. He is said even to have written a copy of verses in congratulation of the event.[1] We have no other means of ascertaining his feelings regarding it. Probably he felt, as many did, that Charles's return was the only means of saving the country from prolonged anarchy. It is very unlikely that the friend of Cromwell and the correspondent of Thurloe cherished any enthusiastic emotions of loyalty. He had cordially accepted the Commonwealth while it lasted; and his wish to dedicate the fruits of his prophetic studies to Richard Cromwell, in the beginning of 1659, do not indicate any doubts of its permanence. If he hailed the Restoration, therefore, in a congratulatory ode, he no doubt did so in the spirit of official compliment which was then so common. As he had served Cromwell and his son—so when the country turned from

[1] Published in "Academiæ Cantabrigiensis ΣΩΣΤΡΑ, sive ad Carolum II., reducem, &c., gratulatio."

Cromwell to Charles, and the return of royalty seemed an absolute necessity to the establishment of civil order and peace, he was equally ready to serve the new Government. There is much to be said from Cudworth's point of view for such an accommodating spirit. He was not, and had never been, a party man. He was, in fact, singularly free from party or political enthusiasm, deeply interested as he was in the great principles lying at the foundation of civil and social order. It was not for him, he may have thought, to interfere with political changes, or to quarrel with the government desired by the country. He had not adapted his theological principles to the Puritan authorities—he did not now change them to please the Caroline bishops. But as he had accepted the Parliament and the appointment which it offered him, so now he joined with the national feeling in welcoming the king; and when Sheldon presented him to a living, he saw no reason for refusing it. We do not wish that he should have done so; but we cannot help regretting that men like Cudworth were so passive in this great crisis. It may have been their duty, as it was their convenience, to acknowledge quietly the new order of things; but it was certainly also their duty to raise their voice on behalf of an equitable and liberal settlement of Church affairs. This they shrank from doing; and, so far as we know, fell in, however reluctantly, with the tide of tyrannous reaction. We cannot wish that Cudworth had repelled Sheldon's kindness; but it was certainly no credit to him, or to any of the Cambridge school, that they did not protest against

Sheldon's policy.[1] More than once in the course of our history we have had occasion to point out this fatal practical timidity on the part of men who yet did so much intellectually to advance the cause of liberty—who, in fact, first enunciated in England its true principles. Thinkers as they were, with a comprehensive insight into the genuine principles both of social and religious order, they lacked courage, and the adventurous enthusiasm which carries forward a great cause. And this is why History has hitherto done so little justice to them. Men of thought who do not venture to stand boldly forward in defence of their principles,—who in fact deliberately fall behind the men of action in the gravest turns of the State,—must be content to be forgotten—comparatively, at least—when the story of the State comes to be told.

From this time forwards there can barely be traced any outline of circumstance in Cudworth's life. The living to which he was appointed, two years after the Restoration, was the vicarage of Ashwell in Hertfordshire; but it does not appear whether he ever settled there. Birch's 'Account,' sufficiently imperfect up to this point, now passes into mere desultory confusion, out of which it is impossible to extort any sequence of narrative. We are told that he was formally admitted to his living in the end of 1662;

[1] In severely characterising, as we have more than once done in the course of these volumes, Sheldon's conduct at the Restoration, we do not overlook the fact that it was the House of Commons, even more than the bishops, that led the reaction. This does not alter our judgment, however, either of the bishops or of our divines in so far as they did not raise their voices for a wiser policy.

but we get no further trace of him till the beginning of 1665. Then we have a series of letters, one from Cudworth himself to Worthington, and others from More to Worthington, which serve to throw some light on his intellectual plans and labours. He had reverted to his former speculations, and was busy with his treatise on "Moral Good and Evil." Probably the course of thought since the Restoration had alarmed him, and reawakened all his anxiety to clear up the essential idea of morality, and place its fundamental principles on a rational basis. But he seems to have worked slowly, and halted frequently in his progress. In the mean time the subject was taken up by More, at the earnest entreaty of certain friends; and our author seemed likely to be forestalled in the great design of his life. His anxiety on this score is the subject of his letter to Worthington, which bears the date of January 1665. Natural as his feelings may have been, there is something undignified in their mode of expression, and the curious jealousy which he betrays lest More should really anticipate him. "You know, I have had this designe concerning Good and Evil, or Natural Ethicks, a great while; which I begun above a year agoe (when I made the first sermon in the chapel about the argument) to study over anew, and dispatch a discourse about it. No man had so frequently exhorted me to it, and so earnestly, as this friend. But, about three months since, unexpectedly, he told me on a suddain, he had begun a discourse on the same argument. The next day, in writing, I imparted my mind more fully and plainly to him. Whereupon

he came to me, and told me he would speak with me about it after a day or two. So he did, and then excused the business; that he could not tell whether I would dispatch and finish it or no, because I had been so long about it; that Mr Fullwood and Mr Jenks had sollicited him to do this, and that you were very glad that he would undertake it. But now he understood I was resolved to go through with it, he was very glad of it; that he would desist and throw his into a corner. All this I impart to you privately, because a common friend. I have not spoken to anybody else but Mr Standish, and something to Mr Jenks and Fullwood."

More certainly appears in the higher light in this correspondence. He seems unaffectedly anxious that Cudworth should do the work rather than himself. His reluctance to enter upon it, and his deference to the claims of his friend, are frank and genuine. In his second letter he gives a detailed account of all the circumstances which led to his writing himself an ethical treatise—how little at first he relished the idea, but how gradually his mind was attracted by it, as well as his conscience moved by the importunity of his friends.[1] Nothing would content them but his "setting upon the work, as it was uncertain when Dr Cudworth's would come out;" and the effect of so much earnestness was, that he awoke one morning with all the subject on his mind, and began seriously to think of a task thus providentially pre-

[1] He repeats the same account virtually in his address *ad lectorem*, prefixed to his 'Enchiridion Ethicum' published in 1667. —See subsequent page.

sented to him, crossing as it did the "order of his studies" and "other great and innocent pleasures," which he had promised himself in following out this order.

We do not learn the special causes which retarded the publication of Cudworth's work. There may have been some difficulty regarding the publication, as in the case of his later great work—a difficulty which More's work may have escaped, as being in Latin; or the size of the work, as was the fashion of all his writing, may have so grown upon him as to impede its progress. There is a Discourse by him on Moral Good and Evil existing in manuscript, and extending in several folios to nearly a thousand pages. There is further a manuscript containing the "heads of another book of morality," which seems to have been especially intended in refutation of Hobbes.[1] And, lastly, there is his well-known 'Treatise concerning Eternal and Immutable Morality,' which was not given to the public till almost half a century after his death—in 1731—when it was edited from papers in possession of his grandson, Sir Francis Cudworth Masham, by Dr Chandler, then Bishop of Durham. It is difficult to say to which of these treatises the correspondence with Worthington refers.

[1] These MSS., with others, including a Discourse on Liberty and Necessity, probably the same since published under the title of 'A Treatise of Free Will;' and the 'Treatise on Daniel's Seventy Weeks,' already referred to, are preserved in the British Museum. The story of Cudworth's MSS., extracted from the 'Biographia Brittanica,' will be found by the reader in the "Advertisement" prefixed to the brief Treatise of Free Will (1837), which is merely a definite expansion of thoughts on this subject more or less found in his larger and better known works.

The 'Immutable Morality' is generally assumed, in accordance with Dr Chandler's statements in the preface, to have been composed after the publication of 'The Intellectual System;' and in this case the larger Discourse, still in manuscript, on Moral Good and Evil—the title of which more strictly corresponds to his own language in writing to Worthington—would probably be the work on which he was occupied in 1665. The 'Heads of another Book of Morality,' so far as they are given in detail by Birch, do not necessarily indicate a separate treatise. But the question is of little importance. Cudworth's position as a moralist is abundantly apparent in his two great works; and it is hardly possible that any further light would be thrown upon it by the publication of any of his manuscripts. Valuable as all his intellectual work is in a certain sense, he is not one of those authors whose writings are to be prized merely for themselves. His voluminousness was a literary habit. It did not arise from the growth or expansiveness of his thought, but from the discursiveness of his mind and the curious stores of learning at his command. The reader for the most part can gather the substance of his argument or the pith of his meaning in comparatively short compass. The 'Immutable Morality,' therefore, may certainly be held, in conjunction with his larger work, to give us a complete view of his moral system. The brief 'Treatise of Free Will,' recently published,[1] adds nothing to its essential meaning.

The publication of 'The True Intellectual System

[1] 1837—see preceding note.

of the Universe' fills up for the reader what remains of Cudworth's life. This great work, so far as it was ever finished (for it remained an immense fragment), was finished and ready to be published in 1671. The imprimatur, by Dr Samuel Parker, chaplain to Sheldon, now promoted to be archbishop, bears the date of May 29 in that year. But its publication was delayed till 1678, on account of "great opposition from some of the courtiers of King Charles II., who endeavoured to destroy the reputation of it when it was first published." Birch, who gives us this information, adds in characteristic style, "Irreligion began now to lift up its head, and the progress of it was opposed by no person with greater force and learning than by our author."

The course of thought, as well as the tone of society, had greatly altered since the days of the Commonwealth. Tendencies which were then only beginning to show themselves had grown to maturity. Hobbes's great work, published in 1651, reflects the course of change in the public mind, as it helped greatly to advance it. The reader of the 'Leviathan' now is apt to be struck mainly by the vigour and life of its speculative delineations; and no philosophical work was ever written with more power and liveliness. But, after all, nothing is more remarkable in it than its political spirit and design. It aimed to set up a new order of things—or, rather, an old order in a new form. The age had become sick of theological controversy, and of the struggles after a higher development of religious and political liberty. Many had never shared in its religious

aspirations, and the very intensity of those aspirations, and the fierce conflicts which they provoked, had served to exhaust them. Thus at length there was not only a lull, but a resurgence in the tide of spiritual and political emotion. Men's minds turned from the chaotic picture of warring sects, a dilapidated Church, and a Commonwealth which, however strong in the strong hands which ruled it, had failed to work itself into any constitutional form to the old ideas of authority which had once bound the national life in firm cords of unity, and controlled the action of both Church and State. Hobbes is one of the most significant expressions of the spirit of reaction in the higher mind of England in the second half of the seventeenth century. There is nothing deeper in him than disgust of religious zeal and contentiousness, and the assertion of an inviolable rule binding the whole sphere of religion and morality as well as politics.

But the reaction, as might have been expected, ran to excess. The ruin of dreams inspired by religious enthusiasm proved fatal not only to religious ambition, but in many respects to moral and spiritual life. Men began to doubt of the reality of that which had promised so much and done so little. They despaired of a religious philosophy, or of any theory fitted to organise and bind into one the higher and lower facts of human life. This is always the danger of such a period of national subsidence. Not only are religious ideals shattered—broken in their very attempt to accomplish too much—but religion itself suffers and becomes dis-

credited by the absurdities and failures which mark its course. Never was this more signally illustrated than after the Restoration. The disgust with which men turned from the religious controversies of the preceding period, not only vented itself in weariness and ridicule of what had gone before, but in a wide-spread distrust of spiritual verities altogether. To higher minds, who preserved alive their power of faith as well as of thought, this was the ominous feature of the times, and excited their chief anxiety. They could see below the superficial drifts of opinion, with all their tendency towards some new form of external authority, deep springs of unbelief. They saw such tendencies in Hobbes, with all his avowed conservatism in Church and State. Reactionary and authoritative in the design of his speculations, it was evident to them that their real drift was to undermine the foundations of religious truth, and under a show of respect for it to leave no rational basis for religion at all. They were not deceived, as some modern critics have been, by the religious form and phraseology of his writings. They looked beyond the surface of his dogmatisms to their radical spirit and meaning, and drew the unhesitating conclusion that a philosophy which left no divine capacity in human nature was essentially unchristian, and could only be met by a counter-philosophy which went to the depths of human thought and belief.

This was the great task now essayed by Cudworth, as it had been long pondered by him. No one, there is reason to believe, had seen earlier, as no

one estimated more clearly and fully, the force of the irreligious movement. Further, no one had studied more closely the dogmatic and formal enthusiasms which had so long dominated the religious mind of England, or recognised more the inevitable tendency to reaction which lay in them. His broad and keen rational insight, and deep though quiet seriousness, discerned the full nature of the crisis, and had long done so. Slowly and heavily, but surely, his mind had been working for years at the special problems raised by the penetrating and bold genius of Hobbes, so fitly corresponding to the spirit of an age at once reactionary and sceptical. The publication of his great work, 'The Intellectual System of the Universe,' in 1678, was the outcome of his long-gathered and laboriously-pondered speculation on the subject.

The reception of the work was such as might have been expected in the evil times on which it had fallen. Delayed in its issue by courtier intrigues, it was assailed almost as soon as made public by superficial and unthinking religionists. First, a Roman Catholic student, "with leave of superiors," attacked its views of the pagan philosophy and mythology, which no doubt raised many questions. Then "a Protestant divine, Mr John Turner," accused the author of being a "Tritheistic,"—a sect for which he supposes the author "may have a kindness, because he loves hard words." He is certain that Cudworth, if not a "Tritheistic," is "something else without either stick or trick," and "that the most charity itself can allow the doctor, if it were to step

forth and speak his most favourable character to the world, is, that he is an Arian, a Socinian, a Deist." Even Dryden, whose easy indifference and professed conversion to Romanism very well represent the spirit of the time, had a hit at the author of the 'Intellectual System' as having "raised such strong objections against the being of a God and Providence, that many think he has not answered them." There is never anybody so unthinkingly orthodox as the clever man of the world, when he thinks it necessary to interest himself in religion. The broad open-eyed candour and large-mindedness of Cudworth were unintelligible to the definite, facile, and sharply moulding intellect of the author of the 'Religio Laici' and 'The Hind and the Panther.' Cudworth's fate as a Christian thinker was discouraging, and he felt it to be so; but it was, as Shaftesbury[1] said, "only the common fate of those who dare to appear fair authors." The religious world welcomes decision rather than frankness, and is still capable of accusing an author "of giving the upper hand to the atheists, for having only stated their reasons and those of their adversaries fairly together." Fifty years later, Warburton, who greatly admired and appreciated the author of 'The Intellectual System,' speaks[2] with some bitterness of the treatment which he received, and its effects. Although few, he says, were able to follow his profound arguments, yet "the very slowest were able to unravel his secret purpose—to tell the world that

[1] Characteristics, ii. 262. Lond. 1737.

[2] Preface to second vol. of his Divine Legation of Moses.

he was an atheist in his heart and an Arian in his book! Would the reader know the consequence? —why the zealots inflamed the bigots?—

'"Twas the time's plague, when madmen led the blind.'

The silly calumny was believed; the much-injured author grew disgusted; his ardour slackened; and the rest, and far greatest part, of the defence never appeared."

In course of time, however, the great power and learning of the 'Intellectual System' secured it a worthy reception with all thoughtful and scholarly readers both at home and abroad. Le Clerc, when he commenced his 'Bibliothèque Choisie' in 1703, gave large extracts from it, which engaged him in a controversy with Bayle. He expressed, at the same time, a desire that the work should be translated into Latin for the benefit of Continental students. Several attempts were made to do this, but the task was not accomplished till thirty years later, when Mosheim, so well known for his labours in Church history, published his translation, with many valuable notes and illustrations, which have been again translated into English, and are found in one of the most common editions of the 'Intellectual System.'[1] A translation was also begun into French in the beginning of last century, but never completed. In the mean time the work was abridged in English by Mr Wise, a Fellow of Exeter College, Oxford, under the title of 'A Confutation of the Reason and Philosophy of Atheism.' This abridgment was published

[1] London, printed for Thomas Tegg, 1845.

at London in 1706, and prefaced by an elaborate introduction, in which Cudworth's views regarding the Trinity and the resurrection of the body are examined at length.

With the publication of his great work Cudworth's life may be said to terminate, although he survived ten years later. Whether or not it be altogether true, as Warburton says, that the reception of his work disgusted him, there is reason to think that his intellectual activity was not prolonged beyond the date of its appearance. In the same year he was made a prebendary of Gloucester. Probably the same influence which had befriended him at the Restoration, secured for him this final promotion. He died at Cambridge on the 26th of June 1688, in the seventy-first year of his age, and was interred in the chapel of the college in which he had so long lived as master.

Of his personal character and manners we have no description; nor is it easy to discern the familiar lineaments of the man, as he lived and moved among his friends, through all the meagre and desultory vagueness of Birch's 'Account,' or any other notices of his life which have come down to us. In his correspondence with Worthington, we have seen some trace of a slight narrowness and jealousy of temper; but this is a mere transitory ebullition, which after all may mean very little. More's more agile and discursive spirit had outstripped him in his favourite intellectual ambition of writing a book on "Natural Ethics," and some soreness of feeling was excusable in the circumstances. Such indications as

we can gather point upon the whole to an elevated and noble character—a spirit not only free from the vulgar sectarianisms of the time, but intent upon high objects, and generous as it was lofty. His portrait conveys the same impression. If somewhat heavily lined, like that of Whichcote, and even touched with austerity in its massive and long-drawn features, it is also full of sweetness. The face is that of a severe and powerful, but also a gentle-minded and tolerantly meditative, student.

We have already alluded to Cudworth's daughter, and our notice of the father would not be complete without adding a few words concerning her. She inherited his metaphysical genius, and may be said by herself to deserve a niche in the history of English philosophy; but she is chiefly known as the fast and cordial friend of Locke, who died at her house in 1704, where he had resided in retirement some years before. She became the second wife of Sir Francis Masham of Oates, in the county of Essex; and her son rose to some distinction as a master in the Court of Chancery. Her chief writing was, 'A Discourse Concerning the Love of God,' published at London in 1696. She introduces this tract with observing that "whatever reproaches have been made by the Romanists on the one hand, of the want of books of devotion in the Church of England, or by the Dissenters on the other, of a dead and lifeless way of preaching, it may be affirmed that there cannot any where be found so good a collection of discourses on moral subjects as might be

made of English sermons, and other treatises of that nature, written by the divines of our Church. Which books are certainly of themselves the greatest and most general use of any; and do most conduce to that which is the chief aim of Christianity, a good life." She then "animadverts upon those who undervalue morality, and others who strain the duties of it to an impracticable pitch, and pretend to ascend by it to something beyond or above it;" and afterwards proceeds to consider the conduct of those who build their practical and devotional discourses upon principles which will not bear the test, but which oblige them to lay down such assertions of morality as sober and well-disposed Christians cannot understand to be practicable. And here she applies herself to the examination of Mr John Norris's[1] scheme in his 'Practical Discourses' and other treatises, wherein he maintains that "mankind are obliged strictly, as their duty, to love, with desire, nothing but God only, every degree of desire of any creature whatsoever being sinful. Which assertion Mr Norris defends upon this ground that God, not the creature, is the immediate efficient cause of our sensations; for whatsoever gives us pleasure has a right to our love: but God only gives us pleasure; therefore he only has a right to our love. This hypothesis is considered with great accuracy and ingenuity by Lady Masham, and the bad consequences of it represented in a strong light. Her

[1] Norris, the famous idealist, rector of Bemerton, whose connection with More and the Platonic movement will afterwards appear.

discourse was translated into French by Mr Peter Coste, and printed at Amsterdam in 1705."[1]

Lady Masham was plainly a genuine disciple of her father's rational theology, distinguished like him by breadth of insight, candour, and love of truth, as well as by unusual learning, sagacity, and penetration. It is interesting to connect through her the names of Cudworth, Newton, and Locke. The history of philosophy is lightened, and even its higher significance brought into relief, by any episode which, like this, unveils its diffusive influence, and the pleasant friendships which underlie and unite its great movements.

II. In now turning to examine Cudworth's work as a Christian teacher and thinker, there are three main aspects in which he may be regarded: 1st, As a preacher; 2d, As a theistic thinker; and, 3d, As a moralist. The same lines of thought more or less appear in all his writings, and there is a specially intimate relation betwixt his higher philosophy, unfolded in the 'Intellectual System,' and his views as a moralist; but it will conduce to clearness, and help to bring out more fully both the value of his labours and his position in connection with his time and the school to which he belongs, to consider him in these successive points of view.

1. Our knowledge of Cudworth as a preacher rests upon two sermons, one of which, as already mentioned, he delivered before the House of Commons on the 31st of March 1647. This sermon of itself places him in the highest rank as a preacher.

[1] Birch, xxvi., xxvii., preface to Tegg's ed.

Large in thought and eloquent in expression, it is instinct throughout with a glow of feeling and harmony and grace of composition which are too rare with him. It is a pleasing surprise, after his earlier writings, published, with only his initials, in 1642. These serve to show the bent of his mind and the instruments of his early culture—the recondite sources from which he fed his great intellectual appetite; but he is hardly as yet in them thinking for himself. With great acuteness, ingenuity, and learning, they have something also of the rawness and pedantic parade of acquired learning which belong to a young writer. But in his sermon before the House of Commons his mind moves with power, ease, and felicity. There is everywhere the inspiration of a living and noble sense of truth—a perception of its divine catholicity and grandeur—which raises him far above the sectarian contests waged in its name; while the circumstances in which he speaks—the great crisis and the great audience before him—give an unwonted wing to his thoughts, and an unwonted rapidity and symmetry to their form. We give a few extracts:—

"Ink and paper can never make us Christians; can never beget a new nature, a living principle in us; can never form Christ, or any true notions of spiritual things, in our hearts. The Gospel, that new law which Christ delivered to the world, is not merely a dead letter without us, but a quickening spirit within us. Cold theorems and maxims, dry and jejune disputes, lean syllogistical reasonings, could never yet of themselves beget the least glimpse of true heavenly light, the least sap of saving know-

ledge in any heart. All this is but the groping of the poor dark spirit of man after truth, to find it out with his own endeavours, and feel it with his own cold and benumbed hands. Words and syllables, which are but dead things, cannot possibly convey the living notions of heavenly truths to us. The secret mysteries of a divine life, of a new nature, of Christ formed in our hearts, they cannot be written or spoken, language and expressions cannot reach them; neither can they be ever truly understood, except the soul itself be kindled from within, and awakened into the life of them. A painter that would draw a rose, though he may flourish some likeness of it in figure and colour, yet he can never paint the scent and fragrancy; or if he would draw a flame, he cannot put a constant heat into his colours; he cannot make his pencil drop a sound, as the echo in the epigram mocks at him. All the skill of cunning artisans and mechanicks cannot put a principle of life into a statue of their own making. Neither are we able to enclose in words and letters the life, soul, and essence of any spiritual truths, and, as it were, to incorporate it in them."

Again: "The best assurance that any one can have of his interest in God is doubtless the conformity of his soul to Him. Those divine purposes, whatsoever they be, are altogether unsearchable and unknowable by us; they lie wrapt up in everlasting darkness, and covered in a deep abyss. Who is able to fathom the bottom of them? Let us not, therefore, make this our first attempt towards God and religion, to persuade ourselves strongly of these

everlasting decrees; for if at our first flight we aim so high, we shall haply but scorch our wings, and be struck back with lightning as those giants of old were, that would needs attempt to assault heaven. And it is indeed a most gigantick essay to thrust ourselves so boldly into the lap of heaven; it is a prank of Nimrod, of a mighty hunter, thus rudely to deal with God, and to force heaven and happiness before His face, whether He will or no. The way to obtain a good assurance, indeed, of our title to heaven, is not to clamber up to it by a ladder of our own ungrounded persuasions, but to dig as low as hell by humility and self-denial in our own hearts. And though this may seem to be the farthest way about, yet it is indeed the nearest and safest way to it. We must, as the Greek epigram speaks, *ascend downward* and *descend upward*, if we would indeed come to heaven, or get any true persuasion of our title to it.

"O divine love! the sweet harmony of souls! the musick of angels! the joy of God's own heart! the very darling of his bosom! the source of true happiness! the pure quintessence of heaven! that which reconciles the jarring principles of the world, and makes them all chime together! that which melts men's hearts into one another! Let us endeavour to promote the Gospel of peace, the dove-like Gospel, with a dove-like spirit. This was the way by which the Gospel at first was propagated in the world; *Christ did not cry, nor lift up His voice in the streets; a bruised reed He did not break, and the smoking flax He did not quench;* and yet *He*

brought forth judgment unto victory. He whispered the Gospel to us from Mount Zion in a still voice; and yet the sound thereof went out quickly throughout all the earth. The Gospel at first came down upon the world gently and softly, like the dew upon Gideon's fleece; and yet it quickly soaked quite through it; and doubtless this is the most effectual way to promote it further. Sweetness and ingenuity will more command men's minds than passion, sourness, and severity; as the soft pillow sooner breaks the flint than the hardest marble. Let us *follow truth in love;*[1] and of the two, indeed, be contented rather to miss of the conveying of a speculative truth than to part with love. When we would convince men of any error by the strength of truth, let us withal pour the sweet balm of love upon their heads. Truth and love are the two most powerful things in the world; and when they both go together they cannot easily be withstood. The golden beams of truth and the silken cords of love twisted together will draw men on with a sweet violence, whether they will or no. Let us take heed we do not sometimes call that zeal for God and His Gospel which is nothing else but our own tempestuous and stormy passion. True zeal is a sweet, heavenly, and gentle flame, which maketh us active for God, but always within the sphere of love. It never calls for fire from heaven to consume those who differ a little from us in their apprehensions. It is like that kind of lightning (which the philosophers speak of) that melts the sword within, but singeth not the scab-

[1] He gives the Greek, of course, in the text—"ἀληθεύειν ἐν ἀγάπῃ."

bard; it strives to save the soul, but hurteth not the body. True zeal is a loving thing, and makes us always active to edification, and not to destruction."

The spirit of Cudworth's sermons represents the earlier and less systematic phase of the Cambridge movement, as we see it in Whichcote. The attitude of the two preachers towards the religious questions and features of the time is very much alike. There is the same condemnation of its dogmatic and formal extravagances, of its assumptions of peculiar knowledge and zeal, and generally of its love of religious agitation rather than of religious practice; while, in opposition, there appear the same leading ideas,—of the co-ordinate relation of all knowledge, the complementary character of philosophy and religion, and the essential connection of religion with life and morality.

(*a*) He is eloquent in favour of all true knowledge, "which of itself naturally tends to God, who is the fountain of it; and would ever be raising our souls up upon its wings thither, did not we detain it, and hold it down, in unrighteousness. All philosophy to a wise man, to a truly sanctified mind, is but *matter for divinity*[1] *to work upon.* Religion is the queen of all those inward endowments of the soul; and all pure natural knowledge, all virgin and undeflowered arts and sciences, are her handmaids, that rise up and call her blessed."

There is no thought more frequently reproduced in all the Cambridge writings than this of the harmonious relation of philosophy and religion, of cul-

[1] Ὕλη τῆς Θεολογίας.

ture and piety, of reason and faith. The thought takes various expression, and was considered of vital importance for the time. It would be far from true to say that Puritanism was unfavourable to learning. In its higher representatives it was eminently learned. It was none the less its tendency in all its extreme forms to depreciate natural knowledge, and separate the provinces of rational inquiry and religion. The very name of Reason excited suspicion, and was supposed to carry with it the taint of heresy.[1] This tone was all the more fatal in the seventeenth century that philosophy was then beginning its independent career, and ready from its side to isolate and exalt the spirit of rational thought discredited by the prevailing religionism. It was therefore a real service to bring forward the harmonious relations of philosophy and religion, and to emphasise the spiritual as the higher side of human nature, and not a factitious addition to it made by some process of religious magic. To separate religion from thought is to convert it into a superstition. To separate thought and philosophy from religion is to take from them their highest inspiration. No adequate philosophy can ignore the great problems of life, or turn aside from those spiritual realities which are the crown of all our "inward endowments," and move with such force human history. Division of labour need not imply contradiction of interpretation. A philosophy which is true to facts should find its complement rather than its antagonist in a religion which is also true to facts. A faith which is real,

[1] Culverwell's Light of Nature, chap. I.—See subsequent page.

and a reason which is right, support and do not displace one another.

This was the confident idea of the Cambridge divines: and their instinct was right even where their own practice failed. They were by no means free from irrationalities of their own; but at least they kept aloof from that mass of traditionary and scholastic theory which overlaid the Puritan theology, and which has been so little able to withstand the sifting processes of modern inquiry. They gave their chief interest and study to the moral side of Christianity and the divine power which it reveals in the life and sacrifice of divine love. They certainly never show any jealousy of the progress of thought. They know of no conflicts betwixt reason and faith to be soldered up by theological or other devices. Their ideal devotion to reason is unbounded. It is the sovereign of the harmonical or rightly-adjusted soul, to which, "re-enthroned in her majestick seat, and reinvested with her ancient power," all lower faculties and interests must give an account of themselves.[1]

(*b*) But if Cudworth strongly maintained the ultimate harmony of knowledge and faith, he still more strongly maintained the unity of faith and life, of religious principle and morality. This is his favourite thought as a preacher. The passages already quoted show this. But he repeats the truth with frequent felicities of expression. The object of religion, he insists, is not to propagate opinions, however right or orthodox, still less "to contend for this or that

[1] Second Sermon, p. 79, 80—Works, vol. ii.

opinion, but only to persuade men to the life of Christ." This is "the pith and kernel of all religion; without which all its several forms are but so many several dreams." "Christ was *vitæ Magister*, not *scholæ:* and he is the best Christian whose heart beats with the truest pulse towards heaven; not he whose head spinneth out the finest cobwebs. He that endeavours really to mortify his lusts, and to comply with that truth in his life which his confidence is convinced of, is nearer a Christian, though he never heard of Christ, than he that believes all the vulgar articles of the Christian faith, and plainly denieth Christ in his life. The way to heaven is plain and easy, if we have but honest hearts; we need not many criticisms, or school-distinctions. Christ came not to ensnare us and entangle us with captious niceties, or to puzzle our heads with deep speculations, and lead us through hard and craggy notions into the kingdom of heaven. No man shall ever be kept out of heaven for not comprehending mysteries, if he had but an honest and good heart that was ready to comply with Christ's commandments."

It was the distemper of the times to invert all this,—"to scare and fright men only with opinions, and make them solicitous about the entertaining of this and that speculation; whilst, in the mean time, there is no such care taken about keeping of Christ's commandments. We say, *Lo, here is Christ*, and *Lo, there is Christ*, in these and these opinions; whereas, in truth, Christ is neither here nor there, nor anywhere but where the spirit of Christ, where the life

of Christ, is." For men "to spend all their zeal upon a violent obtruding of their own opinions and apprehensions upon others which cannot give entertainment to them," is repugnant both to the doctrine and example of Christ, and an endless source of "discord and contention in Christian commonwealths; whilst, in the mean time, these hungry and starved opinions devour all the life and substance of religion, as the lean kine in Pharaoh's dream did eat up the fat." A violent opposition to "other men's superstitions," without any inward "principle of spirit and life in their own souls," was common with the noisy religionists of the age. "Many that pull down idols in churches set them up in our hearts; and whilst they quarrel with painted glass, make no scruple at all of entertaining many foul lusts, and committing continual idolatry with them."

It required some courage to address the British House of Commons in this style in 1647; and some of those addressed can hardly fail to have been pricked in their conscience at the faithful words. There were many Puritan preachers ready to handle "school-distinctions" and the "captious niceties" of orthodoxy; but there were few who ventured to speak such words of truth and soberness, and to set forth so distinctly the essence and meaning of all religion. At the close of a religious revolution which had excited the most hostile passions, and in which the most sacred subjects had passed into shibboleths of party warfare, it was a great thing to hold up before those who had been champions alike in the theological and civil strife,

a picture of religion which transcended all their wrangling, and had nothing to do with their most cherished watchwords. The very air had become infected with religious contentiousness. Many a grim senator and warrior before the preacher had spent their lives, and were willing to have spent their blood, for "this or that opinion;" and their hearts must have moved within them to hear from one who was animated by as strong a love of spiritual liberty as any of them, that religion in its vital essence had no connection with their favourite speculations and fancies —that an enthusiasm which boasted of its peculiar privilege was no more religion than a sacerdotalism which had prated of ceremonial blessing, and that the only true religion was loving God and keeping His commandments — the being good and doing good.

In the same spirit Cudworth deals with the special question of the relation of justification and sanctification, so much spoken of in the religious language of the day. His views here, in fact, are nothing else than a theological application of his general view of the nature of religion. He does not object to discriminate betwixt justification and sanctification, or even to speak of an "imputative righteousness." It is not his intention "to quarrel about words and phrases, as if Christ's meritorious satisfaction might not be said to be imputed to those that repent and believe the Gospel for remission of sins; much less to deny what the Holy Scripture plainly asserts, true and living faith that worketh by love, which is the very essence of the new creature or regenerate

nature, *to be imputed or accounted for righteousness.*" But he strongly repudiates the idea of ever conceiving salvation apart from its essential moral meaning, and cautions against the "Antinomian error, too often insinuated under the notion of imputed righteousness, as if there were no necessity of inherent righteousness, and a real victory over sin, in order to salvation."

In the second sermon there are many references to the religious parties of the time, which Cudworth sketches, upon the whole, with some degree of fairness and insight, but without adequate discrimination. True criticism, even of phenomena before their eyes, is not to be expected in the writers of the seventeenth century. Their descriptions are inextricably mingled up with their own prejudices and fancies. Cudworth is free from prejudice; but his portraiture is clumsily moulded by his own preconceptions, and the habits of a meditative rather than a critical intellect. Yet it is easy to trace under his somewhat vague epithets [1] certain obvious divergencies of religious opinion, and still more easy to recognise the variety and violence of the religious agitations which moved the century. It was well for the country as well as for religion that there were minds which stood firm amidst the commotion, and which could conceive and embody such a picture of genuine Christianity as Cudworth's sermons both present. It is comparatively rare in every age to

[1] Ceremonial righteousness, opinionative zeal, high-flown enthusiasm, seraphicism, epicurising philosophy, Antinomian liberty, &c.—Second Sermon, p. 84. Birch's ed., vol. ii.

find earnestness combined with sense, and a profound depth of religious feeling with a comprehensive realisation of the facts of life. Intensity is the cheap product of excitement; and repeated experience proves that there is no force of mere genius which may not be caught by the rising gale of religious enthusiasm, and wafted to the wildest heights of absurdity. "Ceremonial righteousness," or sacerdotalism in all its forms; "opinionative zeal," or evangelical dogmatism in its many varieties; an "epicurising philosophy," and an "Antinomian liberty," seemed destined to perpetual resurrection with the wavering advance of religious history. But it remains nevertheless true, that the chief hope for human progress and the perfection of the individual lies in a rational Christian thoughtfulness which is at once true to the divine and the human; and which, while it bows before the mysteries of the Unseen, acknowledges the claims of those natural verities which religion should elevate and purify, but which it can never supersede.

2. We now turn to consider Cudworth in his chief aspect of a religious thinker, as presented in his great work, 'The true Intellectual System of the Universe.' Large as this work now is, extending in the original folio edition to about 900 pages, it was designed to be larger. It expanded unconsciously in the hands of its author till it outgrew all proportion. Some of the digressions run entirely away from the main argument, and make the book rather a series of treatises than a definite and co-ordinated treatise. If it never loses altogether

sight of the subject, which reappears luminously at the close as at the beginning, it has yet, in the mean time, taken up and explored correlative topics at such length that the reader loses all thread of continuous advance, or at least fails to hold in his mind the windings and divergencies of its semi-speculative and semi-historical discussions. The massive build of thought is unrelieved by any graces of style or felicities of literary outline. Yet there is often a marvellous expressiveness in special phrases and passages; and the general effect is highly definite and significant. Taken as a whole, it is a marvellous magazine of thought and learning, and remains one of the most undoubted monuments of the philosophical and theological genius of the seventeenth century.

At first, Cudworth seems to have intended merely a treatise on Liberty and Necessity. But afterwards, as he himself explains, he saw that the question betwixt him and the Hobbean philosophy was really one as to the rational interpretation, or true intellectual system, of the universe—what is the true position of man therein, and what is first and what is last in the order of being? He defines in the outset the various forms of fatalism which appear to him inconsistent with the true order of the universe. There is 1st,—Material necessity, or what he calls the Democritic fate, which leaves no room for the idea of God or spiritual existence at all, but explains all phenomena, even those of thought, by mechanical laws, and the formation of being by the fortuitous concourse or aggregation of atoms. 2d,

Theological or religious fatalism, taught by many scholastic philosophers and modern theologians, which regards all actions as equally necessitated, and refers the ideas of good and evil to the arbitrary will of God. This he calls the "divine Fate immoral." 3d, A fatalism like the ancient stoicism, which, without denying the reality of moral ideas, or a supreme moral Being, identifies this Being with the invariable order of nature, and leaves no room for free-will in men; or, in his own words, takes away from men "all such liberty as might make them capable of praise and dispraise, rewards and punishments." This he calls the "divine Fate moral." All these forms of fate or necessity are essentially inconsistent with a true theory of religion. The first destroys the divine idea altogether: the second and third mutilate the idea so as to leave it without force or value.

Against these views he sets forth three great principles, which, on the other hand, appear to him to sum up religious and moral truth,—viz., 1st, The reality of a supreme divine Intelligence and a spiritual world, against the atomistic materialism of Democritus and Epicurus; 2d, The eternal reality of moral ideas against the Nominalists of the middle ages, and modern divines imbued with their principles; and, 3d, The reality of moral freedom and responsibility in man against all pantheistic naturalism and stoicism. The work which we have, under the name of 'The True Intellectual System of the Universe,' deals formally only with the first of these principles and its correlative antagonism, although

the author often falls into trains of argument more appropriate to the second or third stage of his designed plan. The treatise on 'Immutable Morality' may be taken as the accomplishment of the second part.

Cudworth thus describes his complete conception or philosophy of religion in his own language:— "These three things are the fundamentals or essentials of true religion—namely, that all things do not float without a head and governor, but there is an omnipotent understanding Being presiding over all; that God hath an essential goodness and justice; and that the differences of good and evil moral, honest and dishonest, are not by mere will and law only, but by nature; and consequently, that the Deity cannot act, influence, and necessitate men to such things as are in their own nature evil: and lastly, that necessity is not intrinsical to the nature of everything, but that men have such a liberty or power over their own actions as may render them accountable for the same, and blameworthy when they do amiss; and, consequently, that there is a justice distributive of rewards and punishments running through the world." These three things "taken altogether, make up the wholeness and entireness of that which is here called 'The True Intellectual System of the Universe,' in such a sense as Atheism may be called a false system thereof; the word 'Intellectual' being added to distinguish it from the other vulgarly so-called 'systems of the world' (that is, the visible and corporeal world), the Ptolemaic, Tychonic, and Coper-

nican; the two former of which are now commonly accounted false, the latter true."

It is important to notice the moral interest which lies at the root of all Cudworth's speculation, although, in point of fact, the special ethical question with which he started was not embraced in his extended scheme of argument. Like all his school, he not only maintained zealously the essential connection of religion and morality in life, but he is unable to understand any basis for an adequate theory or philosophy of religion which does not rest on the conception of man as a free moral subject capable of choosing for himself good or evil. As religion cannot exist without morality, so morality cannot exist without liberty; and thus the divine idea comes in the end to sustain itself on the fact of free-will as an essential attribute or characteristic of humanity. This co-ordination of thought will be found to underlie all his system of philosophy. Throughout he is not only, in modern language, an intuitional moralist, but one who never loses sight of the great idea of free-will as the core and life of both religion and morality. The treatise "Of Free Will" shows this more fully, but not more plainly, than it was previously indicated in his writings.

The break-down of his complete plan makes Cudworth doubt whether he should not have "spared" the general title. His hope had been to embrace within the compass of a single volume three several books—"each book having its own particular title; as (I.) against Atheism; (II.) for natural Justice and Morality founded in the Deity; (III.) for Liberty

from Necessity and a distributive Justice of Rewards and Punishments in the world." He makes an apology for his shortcoming; but at the same time maintains the completeness and unity of his work so far as it had been accomplished. It contained, he says, "all that belonged to its own particular title and subject, and was in that respect no piece but a whole." Cudworth's readers are not likely to find fault with him for having abbreviated the original extent of his design, especially as he has in several places—in the beginning of his fourth chapter, for example, and elsewhere—really comprised many of the considerations that would have entered into the special treatment of the subjects of the second and third books proposed by him. His real fault everywhere is not abbreviation, but diffusion; and, as we have already observed, he is eminently one of those writers who carry with them into all special details of argument the full significance and flavour of the general principles which lie at the basis of their thought.

It is difficult to do justice to a work like Cudworth's, and yet keep our remarks within any such compass and unity as would interest the modern reader, or deserve to interest him. And this difficulty arises not merely from the vast and unorganised materials of the book, but perhaps in a still greater degree from the constant repetition of its main ideas. The author constantly returns on the same strain, and even the same modes of expression, in meeting the atheistic objections with which he deals. He lays over and over again his theistic platform in the face of the subversive planes of

thought which appear before him; but he often adds little as he advances to the substance of his argument. He does not dig its foundations deeper nor raise its structure higher.

The pervading polemical character of the work adds to its confusion and desultoriness. It is, as he himself says, an argument "against atheism" rather than in favour of theism. The first three chapters are devoted to the several atheistic systems as conceived and discriminated by him. In the fourth chapter he enters for the first time upon the positive aspect of his subject, and endeavours to deal directly with the "idea of God." But he has no sooner begun than he is seduced into the two longest of all his digressions, as to the true meaning of the pagan mythology and the relation of the Platonic and Christian Trinities. Both these excursions, which are treatises in themselves, spring up in connection with the primary divine attribute of unity. In the fifth and last chapter, which is subdivided into five sections, he resumes the thread of his exposition of the idea of God, with something in the shape of proof of the validity or objective character of the idea—or, in other words, of argumentative evidence for the being of a God. But here too his argument is chiefly negative, or in the form of replies to objections. It takes everywhere the aspect of polemical, rather than of direct, exposition. Positive principles only come out against a vast background of argumentative and negative detail. They do not stand clear and together by themselves.

To take up the course of discussion, therefore,

from point to point, in this vast and tangled array, would be to plunge into a review of systems, and a mass of "philology and antiquity," as the author himself says, which would ill reward our pains. For his mode of dealing with ancient opinion was simply accumulative. He massed quotations from every source; but he neither illumined them with discerning insight, nor sifted and fitted them together with reference to their relative meaning or any sense of historical perspective. It would be easier for modern criticism to begin the task *de novo*, and reconstruct the ancient speculative systems and the fabric of pagan mythology from first sources, than to attempt to unravel the maze which they exhibit in his pages. We abandon, therefore, all attempt to do so, as labour both useless in itself and without any bearing on our purpose, which is to bring out the significance of Cudworth's own thought, rather than his mode of handling the thought of others.

Our purpose will be best attained by keeping in the first instance free of all his digressions, and endeavouring to bring out clearly the import of his theistic attitude against the atheistic systems which he discusses. We shall then pass briefly under review his subordinate speculations touching a plastic Nature, the Trinity, and the Resurrection, which have been considered peculiarly characteristic, and exposed him to criticism both in his own time and since. Finally—after a brief treatment of his position as a moralist—we shall endeavour to estimate his relation to contemporary thinkers, particularly Descartes and Hobbes, and point out how

far any of his speculations may still have a living interest in reference to later cosmical controversies. Under these successive heads we shall gather up in the best manner all that seems most significant in Cudworth's labours.

(*a*) The materialism which Cudworth chiefly attacks by name is that of Democritus[1] and Epicurus—what he calls the "Atheism of Atomicism." But in reality he has constantly in view the speculations of his contemporary Hobbes, which he identifies in many ways with the ancient Democritic philosophy. In the same connection he frequently glances at Descartes, who sought in his physical system to solve phenomena by the mere laws of their connection or interdependence, without the interposition of any special or subordinate agency. The idea now so familiar, and it may be said, accepted by all thinkers, that there is nothing intermediate betwixt the Primal Mover and all the phenomena of movement which constitute the universe, appeared a startling novelty in the seventeenth century, and presented peculiar difficulties to the mind both of Cudworth and of More. The decisiveness with which the idea was seized by Descartes, and the large sphere which he thus seemed to clear for the operation of purely physical laws, seemed to them, as it were, to empty the world of Deity, and place His action out of view. And this serves to explain the manner in which Cudworth occasionally speaks of Descartes, as well as Hobbes, as inimical to Theism.[2]

[1] B.C. 460-361.

[2] Referring to the Cartesians, he says (c. III. xxxvii.) that they "have an undiscerned tang of the

In the opening of his work he distinguishes carefully betwixt the Democritic or Atomic Atheism, and the general theory of the Atomic philosophy. This theory he defines as the recognition of certain primitive "simple elements of magnitude, figure, site, motion," out of which all corporeal phenomena have been formed. Instead of seeing anything to condemn in it, he traces it more or less in all the philosophical systems of antiquity, and even in the primitive Hebrew literature. The monads of Pythagoras, the "homogeneous elements"[1] of Anaxagoras, and the "root-elements"[2] of Empedocles, are all to him but different phases of the same fundamental conception; while a passage in Strabo which speaks of a certain Sidonian or Phœnician of the name of Moschus as the inventor of the Atomic theory, immediately suggests to him the identity of the said Moschus and Moses.[3] There was nothing, therefore, in this venerable and widely accepted dogma, originally inconsistent with Theism. It professed to explain the physical origin of the universe, and nothing else. It presupposed the divine Will as the primal mover of all. But Leucippus and Democritus, and after them Protagoras and Epicurus, cut off the spiritual side of the philosophy, and left only the material. They took away the highest part of it, and left only, as he says, "the meanest and lowest." In this respect Hobbes followed them. He repeatedly recurs to this view, and reprehends his materialistic

mechanic Atheism hanging about them."

[1] Ὁμοιομερῆ.

[2] Ῥιζώματα.

[3] C. I. x., along with Mosheim's notes. See Tegg's ed., i. 20, 21.

opponents with bad faith and stupidity, as well as impiety, in thus mutilating the old Atomic doctrine, and putting forth their Atheistic speculations under its name.

The ancient physiologers, he says, "atomised, but they did not atheise; atheistical atomology was a thing first set on foot by Leucippus and Democritus."[1] "Joining these two things together, the atomical physiology, which supposes that there is nothing in body but magnitude, figure, site, and motion, and that prejudice or prepossession of their own minds, that there was no other substance in the world besides body—between them they begat a certain mongrel and spurious philosophy, atheistically atomical or atomically atheistical."[2] He strongly repudiates the assertion confidently made in his time, and virtually repeated in our own, that the "ancient philosophers never dreamed of any such thing as incorporeal substance,"[3] and that this conception is therefore "the new-fangled invention of bigotical religionists." On the contrary, he maintains that though in all ages there have been those who have disbelieved the existence of anything beyond what was sensible, the fact of Mind or Spirit as a distinct substance has been held by all the most distinguished names in philosophy, from Thales downwards. He quotes Plato and Aristotle at length on the subject, and vindicates to himself

[1] C. I. xxvi.

[2] C. I. xliii.

[3] C. I. xix.—His allusion is evidently to Hobbes's statement, c. 12, part I. of the 'Leviathan,' that the idea of spirit, in the sense of incorporeal substance, "could never enter into the mind of any man by nature."

satisfactorily the conclusions that all the best of the ancient thinkers, including the original Atomists, were "both Theists and Incorporealists."

In addition to the mechanical hypothesis which is his main point of attack, Cudworth indicates three other forms of Atheism, to which he gives the respective names of (1.) Hylopathian; (2.) Cosmoplastic, and (3.) Hylozoic. All are essentially materialistic, no less than the Democritic theory, inasmuch as they do not recognise any existence beyond matter; but they are distinguished from it, and from each other, by the very different conceptions under which they regard matter as operating in the formation of nature. Whereas the mechanical theory views the world as originating inexplicably in the mere conjunction of matter and motion—or atoms somehow in movement, these speculations severally conceive matter itself as the spring of everything. In the first the ὕλη or original matter is supposed to be primarily dead and stupid, but to possess qualities and forms capable of generating or pushing forward into all the phenomena of nature, and even those which contain life and intelligence. This form of Atheism is associated with the name of Anaximander.[1] Again, "the cosmo-plastic or stoical atheism supposes one plastic but senseless nature to preside over the whole corporeal universe;" and lastly, "the hylozoic or Stratonical, attributes to all matter as such a certain living and energetic nature, but devoid of all animality, sense, and consciousness."[2] He calls this latter system "Stratonical," as being derived

[1] B.C. 610-547. [2] C. III. xxx.

from Straton of Lampsacus, a philosopher of the third century before Christ.[1] It is needless to point out the identity of the fundamental conception in all these systems. Matter is conceived in all as possessed of a certain independent activity, capable of generating or developing the world. "Evolution" is the underlying idea of all—whereas "mechanism" or "construction" is the special idea of the Democritic system. And according to the confession of Cudworth himself, all atheistic speculation may be reduced to these two main types, the one of which seeks to explain everything by accidental combinations of matter and motion, and the other by the conception of matter as in itself living, active, and capable of endless development into higher forms of being. The one may be said to bring us ultimately in face of an atom or mere point of matter—the other before some vague conception of material life or force. Even this distinction disappears in the last analysis, and leaves us only a general conception of a law of origin, or primal activity, out of which all being comes. The essential question concerns the character of this law in the last resort. Is it material or spiritual? Is the primal force any form of matter, or is it Mind? Is Mind first or second, or, in Cudworth's language, "senior" or "junior"? And is the world to be conceived as matter *plus* mind, or mind *plus* matter?

The whole question comes at length to this, and no one has ever more clearly apprehended or more

[1] Tutor of Ptolemy Philadelphus, and supposed by some a precursor of Spinoza.

distinctly put the issue than the author of 'The True Intellectual System of the Universe.' He saw in full light what so many Theistic thinkers have taken so long to see, that the subordinate conception of "construction" or "evolution"—of an act or process of origin—is of no vital moment. Theism is no more essentially involved in the one conception than the other; and just as there have been Theistic Atomists, there have been Theistic Hylozoists. The Hylozoist who "professes to hold a Deity and a rational soul immortal, is not to be taken for a mere disguised Atheist or counterfeit histrionical Theist."[1] Hylozoism or Atomism by themselves are merely modes of conceiving the order of things or the formation of the world. They are only Atheistic when combined with corporealism, —in other words, when they exclude Mind from its place in nature, as the prime source and ruler of all, and "acknowledge no other substance besides body or matter." The essence of Atheism, in short, is the displacement of Mind from its position at the head of nature—the subordination of mind to matter as its outcome and highest flower of development, rather than its Maker and Governor. All Atheism is materialism, or, as Cudworth calls it, corporealism. It denies the independent existence and supreme character of mind, and leaves us face to face, not with intelligence, but with a mere vague force which is capable of growing into intelligence, as into any other force of cosmic activity. Cudworth insists over and over again upon this final view of the

[1] C. III. iii.

question, and directs all the force of his argument, under its pressure, to an attempt to establish the distinction and supremacy of Mind in the universe. The genuine Theist, he says, is he "who makes the first original of all things universally to be a consciously understanding nature (or perfect mind)." "Now," he remarks elsewhere, "there are two grand opinions opposite to one another," the one of which contends that "the first principle of all things is senseless matter," the other that "the only unmade thing, and principal cause and original of all other things, was not senseless matter, but a perfect conscious understanding, nature, or mind. And these are they who are strictly and properly called Theists, who affirm that a perfectly conscious understanding being, a mind existing of itself from all eternity, was the cause of all other things; and they, on the contrary, who derive all things from senseless matter, as the first original, are those that are properly called Atheists. Wherefore the true and genuine idea of God in general is this—a perfect conscious understanding being (or mind), existing of itself from eternity, and the cause of all other things."[1] Again, he says, "all Atheists are mere corporealists. For as there was never any yet known, who, asserting corporeal substance, did deny a Deity, so neither can there be any reason why he that admits the former should exclude the latter."[2]

Thus broadly does Cudworth lay down the dis-

[1] C. IV. iv., at the beginning, where he enters upon the positive statement of his Theistic doctrine.

[2] C. III. xxv.

tinction between a Theistic and Atheistic theory of the universe. This is what he means by 'The True Intellectual System of the Universe'—the recognition of Mind, or spiritual Intelligence, at the head of all things, as their original Source and supreme Governor. That on the other hand is a false or Atheistic system, which, under whatever form, recognises material nature as originating and containing its own development. The first word of the one system is mind, the second, matter. The only word of the other is matter—of which mind is regarded as merely one of the manifestations or evolutions. This is the ultimate issue to which thought comes on the subject. But, in order "more fully and punctually to declare the true idea of God," Cudworth adverts to "a certain opinion of some philosophers who went as it were in a middle betwixt both the former, and neither made matter alone nor God the sole principle of all things; but joined them both together, and held two first principles or self-existent unmade beings independent upon one another—God, and the matter." This middle opinion he ascribes to the Stoics, on the authority of Cicero,[1] Plutarch, and others. He does not think, however, that it is fairly attributed to Aristotle, or to the Neo-Platonists, notwithstanding that these philosophers asserted the eternity of the world. The independent existence of matter and its eternity are not to be confounded. Those who maintain two self-existent principles, God and matter, he pronounces "imperfect Theists." For

[1] Academ. Quæst., lib. i. cap. 6.

"there may be," he says, "a latitude allowed in Theism. And though, in a strict and proper sense, they be only Theists who acknowledge one God perfectly omnipotent, the sole original of all things, and as well the cause of matter as of anything else; yet it seems reasonable that such consideration should be had of the infirmity of human understandings as to extend the word further, that it may comprehend within it those also who assert one intellectual principle self-existent from eternity, the framer and governor of the whole world, though not the creator of the matter; and that none should be condemned for absolute Atheists merely because they hold eternal uncreated matter, unless they also deny an eternal unmade mind ruling over the matter, and so make senseless matter the sole original of all things."[1]

Having thus laid down the essential basis of the idea of God, he shows how it includes not only infinite power and knowledge, or, in other words, omnipotence and omniscience, but, above all, infinite good or love. "Knowledge and power alone," he says, "will not make a God. For God is generally conceived by all to be a most venerable and most desirable being: whereas an omniscient and omnipotent arbitrary Deity, that hath nothing either of benignity or morality in its nature to measure and regulate its will, as it could not be truly august and venerable,[2] so neither could it be desirable, it being that which could only be feared and dreaded." Love, therefore—"the very idea or essence of the good"—

[1] C. IV. vii.

[2] According to that maxim, "Sine bonitate nulla majestas."

must be added to power and knowledge in order to give us the true conception of the divine,—a conclusion for which Cudworth appeals, in his usual manner, to the authority of Plato and the Hebrew Cabalists, who "make a Sephirah in the Deity, superior both to Binah and Chochmah (understanding and wisdom), which they call Chether, or the crown."[1]

It is at this point of his exposition that the question of the divine unity comes before him; and having started this question, he runs off into a prolonged disquisition as to the "true and genuine sense of the pagan Polytheism." It had been argued "that this opinion of monarchy, or of one supreme God, the maker and governor of all, hath no foundation in nature, nor in the genuine ideas and prolepses of men's minds; but is a mere artificial thing, owing its original wholly to private fancies and conceits, or to positive laws and institutions amongst Jews, Christians, and Mahometans."[2] This, if well founded, was a formidable objection to the truth of the divine unity. For one of the fundamental principles of the philosophy of the Cambridge school was, that all true divine ideas, as all other ideas, were so far *innate*—coincident with the natural anticipations, even when transcending the actual discovery of the human mind. If Polytheism, therefore, rather than Monotheism, was the natural expression of the mind in religion, and the Monotheistic stage was only reached by artificial means—the influence of a special culture or special authority, this constituted an obvious diffi-

[1] C. IV. ix. [2] C. IV. xi.

culty. Were it found true that Pagan nations generally worshipped "a multitude of self-existent and independent deities, acknowledging no sovereign Numen—this," he says, "would much have stumbled the naturality of the divine idea." It was with the view of "assoiling of this difficulty, so formidable at first sight," that he entered into the whole subject of Pagan theology, and sought to trace the hidden Monotheism underlying its polytheistic modes of expression.

We shall not follow our author in this digression. The subject of ancient beliefs and of the growth of religious ideas has passed into a new phase with the advance of historical criticism. And whatever may now be thought of our author's conclusion, "that the Pagan theologies all along acknowledged one sovereign and independent deity from which all their other gods were generated," there are no modern students who would consider it of any serious importance in its bearing on the general question of Theism. For were it granted that Polytheism was the natural religion of man everywhere, and that the course of religious thought, as modern inquiry tends to show, has been upwards from the rudest nature-worship to a Monotheism more or less pure—instead of the Pagan religions being, according to the old view, distortions and popular corruptions of an original revelation—the fact nevertheless remains, that Monotheism represents the higher growth of reason and civilisation in all countries. And this fact surely—that man everywhere, with the advance of thought and the general improvement of his

nature, outgrows the Polytheistic instincts in which worship begins—must be held to be a clear proof that the Monotheistic idea is natural,—as natural, certainly, as any other growth or discovery of the human reason in regard to the Divine.

Passing therefore from this topic, and also, in the mean time, from our author's discussion of the Christian and Platonic Trinities, we shall follow up as briefly as we can his defence of Theism in his concluding chapter. Here, as everywhere, he so mixes up his argument with endless replies to objections, that it is extremely difficult to disentangle its main thread. He is very anxious, as he says, not "to dissemble any of the Atheist's strength;" and so he parades all their "most colourable pretences against the idea of God," with a view of exposing their "folly and invalidity." There are, first of all, objections to the idea itself, already so far explained and vindicated. These objections are set forth and elaborately refuted in the first section of the chapter. Then there is a series of special objections as to the impossibility of creation out of nothing—the nature of spiritual or incorporeal existence—the "phenomena of motion and cogitation," and, finally, the difficulties of providence —all of which are treated in separate sections. From this mass of laborious argumentation we shall endeavour to extract the most distinctive principles.

The essential core of all his thought—the reality of mind or spiritual existence—Cudworth vindicates on many grounds, some of them far from satisfactory — as, for example, apparitions and miracles. It is strange how much stress even philosophical

theologians in the seventeenth century were inclined to lay upon the supposed fact of apparitions as a direct confutation of Atheism. Our author is less credulous than his friend More or Glanvill. He does not give a series of ghost stories in proof of the supernatural. He admits even that there is "much of fabulosity" in many of the relations of such appearances. Still he is very indignant with men like Hobbes, who had ventured to explain them by the mere force of imagination—"as if the strength of imagination were such that it could not only create fancies, but also real sensible objects, and that at a distance too from the imaginers. From which prodigious paradox," he adds, "we may take notice of the fanaticism of some Atheists, and that there is nothing so monstrously absurd which men infected with atheistic incredulity will not rather entertain into their belief, than admit of anything that shall the least hazard or endanger the existence of a God. For if there be once any invisible ghosts or spirits acknowledged as things permanent, it will not be easy for any to give a reason why there might not be one supreme ghost also, presiding over them all and the whole world."[1]

The ideas of miracle and prophecy, again, already presuppose a higher spiritual intelligence. Supernatural results are only intelligible on a basis of supernaturalism. But seeing that this is the very point in question, it is plainly invalid to argue from an effect which can only be conceived in connection with a supernatural intelligence, back to the reality of

[1] Chap. v. sect. 1.

such an intelligence as its cause. The supposed effect can only come from such a cause; but the effect itself, however extraordinary, could never have been pronounced miraculous without the presumption of the very thing which it is alleged to prove. Miracles, in short, being only provable on the presupposition of supernatural intelligence, it is clear we can never prove the fact of such intelligence by supposed miraculous occurrences.

But Cudworth urges stronger evidence than anything of this kind for his main position. He sees very well that the question is really one as to the philosophical interpretation of human nature. Have we any conceptions except those that we derive through sense, and the objects of which are essentially subject to sense-conditions? If we have not, then whatever is not sensible must be to us nothing. If we cannot validly conceive, but only feign or "imagine" spiritual existence, then it can have no reality to us. This is the position which he ascribes to Hobbes, although, unhappily, he seldom quotes his great opponent quite accurately; and the reader has to be cautious as to the conclusions which he draws. He makes Hobbes an extreme sensationalist, and represents him as not only deriving all our knowledge from sense, but as denying that there can be any proof of anything apart from sense. Upon the whole this representation is not unjust, even if it be somewhat loosely drawn in Cudworth's pages. Hobbes certainly taught that all our mental conceptions are born from sense, that "there is no conception in a man's mind which hath not at first

totally, or by parts, been begotten upon the organs of sense." [1] Nor can it well be disputed that he denied the reality of any existence other than corporeal, although he does not use the exact words attributed to him by our author—"that the only evidence which we have of the existence of anything is from sense." He does not say so directly, but he plainly implies that pure incorporeal existence is an absurdity without any valid ground of evidence.[2] Cudworth's answer to all this is the common one —that sense could never give us cognition, nor originate thought, or the conscious distinction betwixt nature and ourselves. If sense were our highest, and indeed only ultimate faculty, all discrimination of the objects of our sensations, and of ourselves in relation to them, would have been impossible,—"Since one sense cannot judge of another or correct the error of it; all sense, as such (that is, as fancy and apparition), being alike true." He quotes even Democritus as supporting "two kinds of knowledge, one by the senses and another by the mind;" and appeals to the atomic philosophy itself—misinterpreted, he says, by the "notorious dunces" who so much pretend to it—in proof of certain supposed qualities of matter (the so-called secondary qualities), such as heat and cold, bitter and

[1] Leviathan, Part I., "Of Man," c. i.

[2] Speaking of invisible agents, he says, in a passage already so far quoted in a preceding note: "The opinion that such spirits were incorporeal, or immaterial, could never enter into the mind of any man by nature; because, though men may put together words of contradictory signification, as *spirit* and *incorporeal*, yet they can never have the imagination of anything answering to them."—Part I. c. xii.

sweet, red and green, not being "real qualities in the objects without, but only our own fancies,"—in other words, the contribution of our minds in sensitive perception. To make sense everything, seems to him to destroy the very basis of the supposed knowledge derived from it. Upon such an hypothesis, sense itself could hardly escape from becoming a nonentity, "forasmuch as neither fancy nor sense falls under sense, but only the objects of them; we neither seeing vision, nor feeling taction, nor hearing audition, much less hearing sight, or seeing taste, or the like. Wherefore, though God be never so much corporeal as some Theists have conceived Him to be; yet since the chief of His essence, and as it were His inside, must by these be acknowledged to consist in mind, wisdom, and understanding, He could not possibly, as to this, fall under corporeal sense (sight or touch) any more than thought can."[1] Again: "Were existence to be allowed to nothing that doth not fall under corporeal sense, then must we deny the existence of soul and mind in ourselves and others, because we can neither feel nor see any such thing. Whereas we are certain of the existence of our own souls, partly from an inward consciousness of our own cogitations, and partly from that principle of reason, that nothing cannot act. And the existence of other individual souls is manifest to us from their effects upon their respective bodies, their motions, actions, and discourse. Wherefore, since the Atheists cannot deny the existence of soul or mind in men, though no

[1] Chap. v. sect. 1.

such thing fall under external sense, they have as little reason to deny the existence of a perfect Mind, presiding over the universe, without which it cannot be conceived whence our imperfect ones should be derived."[1]

To this subject of the reality and nature of spiritual existence, Cudworth reverts again and again. In addition to all that he says in the opening section of his final chapter, he devotes two further sections virtually to the same subject. He discusses at special length the nature of spirit, the difficulties of exempting it from the idea of extension, and particularly the question whether any created spirit can be conceived as entirely incorporeal, or, as he says, "without a corporeal indument." And here it is he runs off into his digression as to the doctrine of the Resurrection. He discusses also with great keenness the question of the origin of Life, and pronounces, it is needless to say, very strongly against the possibility of its springing out of what he calls "dead and senseless matter." It is curious to notice how closely he here approaches the recent phases of such discussions, and how little of essential novelty there is even in the most startling theories of the modern scientific world. In speaking, for example, of certain speculations which attributed the origin of life—"not only the sensitive in brutes, but also the rational in men"—to modifications of matter "by organisation alone," he might be supposed characterising the theory of evolution in its latest form. Whether he can be supposed as giving any satisfactory answer to it in what he says by way of exposing

[1] Chap. v. sect. 1.

its absurdity is another question. "This hylozoic Atheism," for so he calls it, "thus bringing all conscious and reflexive life or animality out of a supposed senseless, stupid, and inconscious life of nature in matter, and that merely from a different accidental modification thereof, or contexture of parts, does plainly bring something out of nothing—which is an absolute impossibility. If matter, as such, had life, perception, and understanding belonging to it, then of necessity must every atom, or smallest particle thereof, be a distinct percipient by itself; from whence it will follow, that there could not possibly be any such men and animals as now are, compounded out of them, but every man and animal would be a heap of innumerable percipients and innumerable perceptions and intellections; whereas it is plain that there is but one life and understanding, one soul or mind, one perceiver or thinker in every one. And to say that these innumerable particles of matter do all confederate together—that is, to make every man and animal to be a multitude or commonwealth of percipients and persons, as it were, clubbing together—is a thing so absurd and ridiculous, that one would wonder the hylozoists should not rather choose to recant their fundamental error of the life of matter, than endeavour to seek shelter and sanctuary for the same under such a pretence. For though voluntary agents and persons may many of them resign up their wills to one, and by that means have all but, as it were, one artificial will, yet can they not possibly resign up their sense and understanding too, so as to have all but one artificial

life, sense, and understanding; much less could this be done by senseless atoms, or particles of matter supposed to be devoid of all consciousness or animality."[1] "Life and understanding" cannot be conceived as mere accidents of matter, or as possibly evolved or "generated" from it by any process. "That which understandeth in us" is not "blood or brains, but an incorporeal soul or mind vitally united to a terrestrial organised body. And the most perfect mind or intellect of all is not the soul of any body, but complete in itself, without such vital union and sympathy with matter. We conclude therefore," he adds, with what he no doubt felt to be an effective slap at Hobbes, "that this passage of a modern writer—'we worms cannot conceive how God can understand without brains'—is *vox pecudis*, the 'language and philosophy' rather of worms or brute animals than of men."[2]

He pursues in effect the same discussion in the following or fourth section regarding the phenomena of motion and cogitation. He can only conceive of motion as originating in some primal self-activity, or uncreated mind. "Whatever is moved is moved by something else."—But the world is an "Eternal moved." It presents nothing but a course of endless changes; there is no break or beginning in the infinite series. He supposes the Democritic Atheist to urge this as an argument against any first cause or original self-moving power. But admitting the fact of motion to be as represented, this is no reason, but the contrary, he urges, in favour of its

[1] Chap. v. sect. 3. [2] Ibid.

endless continuity. "For were all the motion that is in the world a passion from something else, and no first unmoved active mover, then must it be a passion from no agent, or without an action, and consequently proceed from nothing, and either cause itself, or be made without a cause."[1] The very idea of motion as a translation of influence from one body to another, or what we now call the "correlation of forces," seems to him to prove undeniably an original self-moving force or intelligence, or, in his own words, "that there is some other substance besides body, something incorporeal, which is self-moving and self-active, and was the first unmoved mover of the heavens or world." The movement of one body upon another, or the mere translation of force, he calls "heterokinesy." But we can only rest in self-activity, or "autokinesy"—that is to say, in the action of "some cogitative or thinking Being, which, not acted upon by anything without it, nor at all locally moved, but only mentally, is the immovable mover of the heaven."[2] And so he returns to the primary and essential strain of all his thought, that "cogitation is in order of nature before" what he calls "local motion," and "*incorporeal* before *corporeal* substance, the former having a natural imperium upon the latter"—in other words, that Mind is before Matter, and superior to it. As he elsewhere expresses it—"Knowledge is older than all sensible things; mind senior to the world, and the architect thereof." This, he says, was the doctrine of the Pagan Theists, and the essential controversy betwixt them and their

[1] Chap. v. sect. 4. [2] Ibid.

Atheistic opponents. Whereas to the former, Mind was "the oldest of all things senior to the world and elements,[1] and by nature hath a princely and lordly dominion over all;" to the latter, Matter or Body was the first principle, and Mind merely "a *postnate thing*,[2] younger than the world—a weak, umbratile, and evanid image, and next to nothing." [3]

And the controversy thus stated may be also, as he supposes, "clearly and satisfactorily decided." "Dead and senseless matter," he says, "could never have created or generated mind and understanding, but a perfectly omnipotent mind could create matter."[4] "There must be something self-active and hylarchical, something that can act both from itself and upon matter, as having a natural imperium or command over it. Life and understanding, soul and mind, are no syllables or complexions of things, secondary and derivative, but simple, primitive, and uncompounded natures. . . . Moreover, nothing can be more evident than this, that mind and understanding have a higher degree of entity or perfection in it, and is a greater reality in nature than mere senseless matter or bulky extension. . . . If the sun be nothing but a mass of fire or inanimate subtile matter agitated, then hath the most contemptible animal that can see the sun and hath consciousness and self-enjoyment, a higher degree of entity and

[1] Προγενέστατος, καὶ Κύριος κατὰ φύσιν.

[2] Ὑστερογενὴς.

[3] C. v. sect. i.—Compare another passage in the same extended chapter, sect. 4. The passages are respectively, p. 59 and p. 435, vol. iii., Tegg's ed.; and p. 729, and 858-9, original folio 1678.

[4] C. v. sect. i.

perfection in it than that whole fiery globe." Therefore, he concludes, "a perfect understanding Being is the beginning and head of the scale of entity.[1] An omnipotent understanding Being which is itself its own intelligible, is the first original of all things."[2]

(*b*) But while Cudworth thus clearly maintains Mind or *Nous* at the head of the universe, he has difficulty in conceiving the translation of mind into nature. The conception of God on the one side, and a series of material phenomena on the other, acting under their own laws, by no means satisfy him. Such a philosophy appeared to exclude from nature the operation of any save material causes; and, indeed, "any other vitality acting in it than only the production of a certain quantity of local motion, and the conservation of it according to some general laws."[3] Hence his theory of a "Plastic Nature," which is defined in his own language "as an inferior and subordinate instrument drudgingly executing that part of Providence which consists in the regular and orderly motion of matter—yet, so as there is besides a higher Providence which, presiding over it, doth often supply the defects of it, and sometimes overrule it—forasmuch as this plastic nature cannot act electively or with discretion."[4] Unless we recognise such a medium for the divine action, we must, he supposes, either conclude (with the Democritic Atheists) against the reality of this action altogether, or else hold that "God Himself doth all immediately, and

[1] C. v. sect. 4. [2] Ibid. [3] C. III. xxxvii. [4] Ibid.

as it were with His own hands, form the body of every gnat and fly, insect and mite." The Cartesian notion of a supreme Mover originally starting the machine of the world, and holding all its final springs in His hand, while it moves onwards unceasingly in obedience to its original impress, was uncongenial to the Platonic type of thought. A God thus standing at a distance from the world was very much the same as no God at all; and hence the "tang of mechanic Atheism" which he found in Cartesianism. It seemed to him, as well as to More, to banish the presence of mental, and consequently divine, causality from the world. Moreover, many natural phenomena were to him inexplicable on the principle of mere mechanical law. On the other hand, the idea of God Himself acting in all things immediately served to "render divine Providence operose, solicitous, and distractious, and thereby to make the belief of it to be entertained with great difficulty, and give advantage to Atheists."[1] Such an idea, according to him, was inconsistent with the actual course of nature, the slow and gradual process by which the generation of things proceeds, and "those errors and bungles" which may be supposed to be the result of some agency less than the highest, and therefore capable of being sometimes frustrated and disappointed by the interposition of matter. Whereas an omnipotent agent, as it could despatch its work in a moment, so it would always do it infallibly and irresistibly; no inaptitude or stubbornness of matter being ever able to hinder

[1] C. III. xxxvii.

such a one, or make him bungle or fumble in anything."[1]

Cudworth's "Plastic Nature" is an embodied art or reason—"reason immersed and plunged into matter, and, as it were, fuddled in it and confounded with it." It is not "the divine,—not archetypal, but only ectypal." It is a dull unconscious soul animating all things, and, working in all—a living yet blind power carrying out the purposes of the divine Architect, and insensibly clothing and making manifest the divine Mind. It is curious how he insists on its vital and even spiritual character, and yet on the fact that it is without definite consciousness or self-possession. He illustrates its action by reference to the force of habit, according to which we execute so many spontaneous movements without any deliberation or conscious purpose. As there is thus, so to speak, a subordinate and secondary soul in us, which carries out unreflectively the behests of the higher intelligent nature, so is there such a soul in the world constantly executive of the divine plans—a dumb, patient, sleepless energy, ever obedient to the divine will, and unceasingly translating it into form and action. It is something like the ancient distinction of the divine Reason in itself and in manifestation.[2] Or, again, it is like the instinct of animals, which directly or without knowledge in the ordinary sense accomplishes all the ends of knowledge. But instinct is in this sense superior to the plastic nature, that

[1] Ibid.

[2] The λόγος ἐνδιάθετος and the λόγος προφορικὸς—"the reason of the Mind and the reason uttered." —Ibid.

while it moves blindly it moves sensitively; whereas the soul which he supposes to be resident in matter is destitute alike of sensation and intelligence—a purely motive organic principle in the hands of a higher Agent.

Nor is Cudworth content with asserting the existence of such a general principle or power animating the world—an *anima mundi* everywhere diffused, and taking various forms in plants, animals, and human beings. He seems to recognise something of a special plastic force in plants and animals, and the various orders of being, "forming them as so many little worlds." Although it be unreasonable, he says, "to think that every plant, herb, and pile of grass hath a plastic or vegetative soul of its own, yet there may possibly be one plastic unconscious nature in the whole terraqueous globe, by which vegetables may be severally organised and framed, and all things performed which transcend the power of fortuitous mechanism."[1] And so there may be in the ascending orders of creation a series of higher plastic principles governing their formation, and moulding them to their special ends.

It is unnecessary to enlarge our exposition. Cudworth's general idea of a plastic nature is nothing else than the old Platonic dream of a soul of the world, adopted in his case from affinity with this type of thought, and also in distinct reaction against the mechanical theory of Descartes. It is plainly this spirit of antagonism which prompts his minor adaptations of the idea to the several orders

[1] Digression, appended to C. III.

of animals and plants. Descartes, it is well known, carried out his mechanical theory so as to deny all special animal life in men or in brutes. *Thought* on one side, and *Extension* on the other, made up for him the sum of the universe. The simplicity of the Cartesian conception seemed bald, and empty of divine meaning to the Cambridge school. They wished to feel the breath of the Divine in every part of nature, and to bring it before them in all its movements, as animated and full of life. But in doing this Cudworth ceased to philosophise. He lost sight of facts, as his school was too apt to do, and yielded to the mere phantasies of imagination in suggesting such a number and variety of intermediary principles. The Cartesian generalisation may or may not be able to vindicate itself; but the theory of a general plastic nature, with distinct plastic principles in the progressive orders of being, is condemned by that law of parsimony which is the first and most imperative canon of all genuine philosophical investigations.

(*c*) In carrying out his lengthened analysis of the idea of the divine unity as underlying both the mythological and philosophical conceptions of antiquity, Cudworth, as we have already said, comes across the subject of the Platonic Trinity and its relation to the doctrine of the Christian Trinity. This leads him into a special subdigression, which exposed him in his own age and in the age immediately following to much animadversion. He was supposed to have so expressed himself in reference to the opinions both of Plato and the Christian Fathers as to indicate not

merely a Trinity of Persons, but a Trinity of Beings. He was accused, in other words, of so conceiving the Trinity, that while the Son and the Holy Ghost are acknowledged to be of the same substance with the Father, yet they were not numerically or individually the same. They were centred not in "one singular or individual, but only one common or universal, essence or substance." This and other assertions of a like nature are said to have made so much noise, that they were not only "often cited in company," but that "hardly a pamphlet or book for some years was written about the blessed Trinity, especially in England, and in the heterodox way, which did not bring in Dr Cudworth upon the stage, and vouch his name and quotations for its purpose;" while, on the other hand, "the truly orthodox" made his doctrine "as a mark of their invective."[1] He was denounced as a Tritheist, or a "Tritheistic" in the language of the time; and by others, as a virtual Arian in the sense of Dr Samuel Clarke, who, while asserting the divinity of the three persons in the Godhead, yet maintained that the Father alone is truly and properly the Supreme Being.

It is unnecessary to enter into any detailed consideration of Cudworth's views on the point, because, first of all, he has nowhere distinctly enunciated his own views; and, secondly, the topic is at best a subordinate one to the main structure of his thought as a Christian philosopher. It came before him merely in relation to his exposition of the ancient philosophy, which itself is an excrescence upon his

[1] Introduction to an Abridgment of the Intellectual System, by Tho. Wise, B.D.: 1706.

true subject; and whatever opinions he expresses are designed solely to expound and illustrate the affinity of the Platonic and Christian thinkers. Having, first of all, in the course of his historical review in the fourth book, brought forward and condemned what he calls the pseudo-Platonic Trinity, or the views of several of the later Platonists, who, while speaking of a Trinity, yet "adulterated and deformed" the original conception—which he supposes, in his usual manner, to have been derived from the secret doctrine or Cabala of the Hebrews—he proceeds to vindicate the genuine Platonic doctrine, and to draw out its affinities with the Christian. Whereas the pseudo-Platonic Trinity confounded the difference betwixt God and the creature, and set forth "a confused jumble of created and uncreated beings together," Plato and "some of the Platonists," "retained much of the ancient genuine Cabala, and made a very near approach to the true Christian Trinity."[1] Their three divine hypostases—viz., Monad or God, mind, and soul—are conceived as numerically distinct, or possessing distinct singular essences of their own, and yet as united in one Deity. None of them "are accounted as creations, but all other things whatsoever the creatures of them."[2] "They are not only all eternal, but also necessarily existent and absolutely undestroyable."[3] And yet they are "all three really but one Creator and one God."[4] "The three Platonic hypostases seem to be really nothing else but infinite goodness, infinite wisdom, and infinite active Love and Power—not as mere qualities or accidents, but as substantial

[1] C. IV. xx. [2] Ibid. [3] Ibid. [4] Ibid.

things, that have some kind of subordination one to another—all concurring together to make up one Θεῖον or "Divinity," just as the centre, immovable distance, and movable circumference, concurrently make up one sphere." [1] So far, therefore, he argues, there is an undoubted congruity betwixt the Platonic and the Christian Trinities. They are alike, at least in "these three fundamentals." "First, in not making a mere trinity of names and words, or of logical notions and inadequate conceptions of one and the same thing; but a trinity of hypostases, or subsistences, or persons. Secondly, in making none of the three hypostases to be creatures, but all eternal, necessarily existent, and universal; infinite, omnipotent, and creators of the whole world; which is all one, in the sense of the ancients, as if they should have affirmed them to be Homoousian. Lastly, in supposing these three divine hypostases, however sometimes paganically called three Gods, to be essentially one divinity. From whence it may be concluded, he adds, "that Platonism is undoubtedly more agreeable to Christianity than Arianism—it being a certain middle thing betwixt that and Sabellianism, which, in general, was that mark which the Nicene Council also aimed at."[2]

From this very condensed summary of Cudworth's exposition, it is at least evident that he did not wish to depart in any respect from the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity. If he *Platonised*, according to his manner of speaking, he certainly did not mean to Arianise. On the contrary, Arianism is spoken of

[1] Ibid. [2] Ibid.

throughout as a distinct system from Platonism; and again, the Platonic doctrine of the Trinity, near as it seemed to him to the Christian doctrine, is in two important respects discriminated from it, and pronounced so far deficient. "First, because the Platonists dreamed of no such thing at all as one and the same universal essence or substance of the three divine hypostases; and, secondly, because, though they acknowledged none of these hypostases to be creatures, but all God, yet did they assert an essential dependence of the second and third upon the first, together with a certain gradual subordination; and therefore no absolute co-equality."[1] These features of the Platonic doctrine, in which it came short of the full Catholic doctrine, have led "many late writers" to "symbolise" it with Arianism, but wrongly so. For they are plainly separated on the essential and testing point of the eternity of the second hypostasis, which the Arians denied (hence receiving the name of Exoucontians[2]) and the Platonists affirmed. The real affinity of Platonism is not with Arianism, but with the undeveloped doctrine of the three first centuries, which hesitated to assert the absolute oneness in essence of the Father and Son, and "did not so much as determine that the Holy Ghost was an hypostasis, much less that He was God."

This clear recognition on the part of Cudworth of a process of development in the Christian doctrine of the Trinity, was evidently his main point of difference

[1] Ibid.

[2] Ἐξ οὐκ ὄντων — "of a substance that once was not;" one of the Arian catch-phrases. Hence the name "Exoucontians."

from the common orthodoxy of his time. Speaking in the name of "a Christian Platonist, or Platonic Christian," he apologises for Plato and the genuine Platonists, that while approaching so near the Christian doctrine of the Trinity they yet fell short of it; which, however, was not to be wondered at, seeing that "the generality of Christian doctors for the first three centuries" failed in the same manner to reach its full meaning and statement. This he points out and illustrates at lengh by quotations, and discovers plainly a certain measure of sympathy with the less systematised and less articulated doctrine of the early Church. It is in connection with this that he reverts to the distinction betwixt a "singular" essence, numerically, and "one common and universal essence or substance;" and shows, further, how the early Fathers commonly did not distinguish betwixt *ousia* and *hypostasis*. But while freely pointing out this, and tracing the steps in the development of the Christian doctrine, he nowhere avows his own opinions in any definite manner, nor lays himself open to any charge of heterodoxy. He may be mistaken in his historical analysis of the opinions of the early Church, or in some of the definite statements he makes on the subject, but his conception of the Christian doctrine as only attaining gradually to its full expression in the consciousness of the Church, is now a commonplace in all schools of theological thought. It was a distinct merit of Cudworth to have seized the conception so clearly as he did in his time. The affinity of the Christian and Platonic doctrines was overdone by him, and there is much vagueness and uncertainty

in many points of the analogy which he draws betwixt them, as there is in all the details of his historical sketch—throughout there is the usual lack of criticism and historical perspective; but there were few minds, after all, but his own, which had then conceived the idea of such analogy at all, or sought to trace and unfold those correspondences of thought that constitute the basis of a philosophy of religion.

(*d*) Cudworth's views of the Resurrection are in a similar manner a mere appendix to his general line of argument. They occur in the third section of the fifth or concluding chapter, in relation to his discussion of the nature of incorporeal and unextended being. With unnecessary minuteness he tries to meet all the objections that may be urged against the idea of such being, and, amongst others, the inference which seems to follow from it, as to the "illocality and immobility of human souls and other spirits." But how can such finite spirits be conceived as "thus illocal and immovable, nowhere and everywhere"?[1] This is inconsistent with their finiteness; and, moreover, opposed to the "very principles of religionists themselves," which imply that the souls of men departing out of the body do move from one place to another. With this clue in his hand he leaves off the general discussion in which he has been engaged, and enters upon a prolonged consideration of the state of the soul after death. Is it, after all, divested of all outward vehicle or body? On the contrary, he holds it to be plainly the teaching of the "old philosophic Cabala," — through which every element of

[1] Chap. V. sect. iii.

truth appears to him always filtered,—that while the soul quits the earthly body, it is yet by no means stripped of all bodily shape. The gross, earthy part is put off as an outer garment, but there is "an interior instrument or vestment" hanging about it even in this life, which remains and serves to give to the departed soul locality and capacity of motion. Nay, there is not only, according to the ancient opinion, such a "spirituous and airy body" surrounding the terrestrial, but yet a third kind of body, of a higher rank than either—"luciform" and "celestial" —the special clothing of those souls that have become purged and cleansed from all corporeal affections.[1]

Our author explains at length the agreement betwixt this ancient philosophic doctrine and the Christian doctrine of the Resurrection. They resemble each other in the two points of acknowledging, first, that the supreme happiness of the soul is not to be found in disjunction from all body; and, secondly, that its future bodily investment cannot be of a gross, earthy nature. The doctrine of the Resurrection is a response to the intellectual instinct which associates enjoyment with definiteness and locality of being, and at the same time to the spiritual aspiration which seeks for an emancipation from all grosser affections and passions. The spiritual resurrection-doctrine of St Paul is an inspired affirmation of the Neo-Platonic dream of a "luciform" and "celestial" vehicle for the purified soul. This present body, according to the inspired expositor, is to be looked upon as merely "a dead seed of the future resurrec-

[1] Ibid.

tion-body, which, therefore, is in some sense the same, and in some sense not the same, with it."[1] The "sowing in corruption" and the "raising in incorruption" represents closely the idea of the "Pythagoric cabala." The change will consist not in merely "gilding and varnishing over of the outside," but in a spiritual transformation, whereby we shall be fashioned in the likeness of Christ's glorious body.

This is very much the sum of his expanded exposition, which leads us, however, through many winding paths, and special discussions as to the immediate state of the dead, and as to whether angels and even ghosts have bodies. His opinion clearly is, that there is no finite spirit can be conceived as entirely bodiless. This is the exclusive property of the Supreme Spirit, who alone can be absolutely and purely incorporeal, "whose essence is complete, and life entire within itself, without the conjunction or appendage of any body." And so also is this Spirit, or God Himself, alone ubiquitous; it being "peculiar to that incorporeal essence which is infinite to quicken and actuate all things, and take cognisance of all."[2]

III. It now only remains to us, before endeavouring to sum up our estimate of Cudworth as a thinker, to consider him specially as a moralist. So far we have seen the ethical interest that lies at the root of all his thinking. It was this interest more than anything else which inspired his first labours in philosophy, and which continued his highest inspiration. The vindication of man's distinctive position in the

[1] Ibid. [2] Ibid.

universe as a rational and moral creature formed the centre of his whole system of speculation, around which all its most elaborated reasonings revolved. Man is divine, if there is any divinity at all. All the lines of argument for Christian Theism go forth from the recognition of the human soul as a spiritual reality distinct from nature—absolute amidst its accidents—the true life of all its apparent and reflected life. Such a view already implies a definite moral doctrine; for if the soul be thus a reality—distinct in being and supreme in character—it must in itself be an organ and source, and not merely a receptacle, of truth. What is true or false, good or evil, just or unjust, must be determined, not from without, but from within, and the determinations will partake of the absolute character of the source whence they proceed. Morality in its full contents and development may be an educt of experience, just as every branch of knowledge in its details must be; but the moral no less than the intellectual judgment is from the soul itself—the spiritual affirmation of a spiritual subject going forth into the world of experience, and conditioning it—in no sense derived from it, or conditioned by it.

This is the essential point in Cudworth's moral system, which implies and rests upon a distinct theory of knowledge. The treatise on 'Eternal and Immutable Morality' is, in fact, mainly a discussion of the source of knowledge. It sets out with laying down very clearly the question from the author's point of view. Is morality a thing in itself?

Are the ideas of good and evil, justice and injustice, absolute or only relative—real or factitious—eternal and immutable or only positive and arbitrary? Are they what they are, in short, as he often says, φύσει, "by nature," or θέσει, "by institution"? After enumerating the various defenders of the latter opinion amongst the ancient philosophers—Protagoras in the 'Theætetus;' Pólus and Callicles in the 'Gorgias;' Thrasymachus and Glaucon in the 'Politics;' and Epicurus, "the reviver of the Democritical philosophy, the frame of whose principles must needs lead him to deny justice and injustice to be natural things;" he brings forward, in his usual manner, Hobbes, not by name, but under the general appellation "that late writer of ethics and politics," as the modern exponent of the same views. He has revived "in this latter age," not only "the physiological hypotheses of Democritus and Epicurus," but also the moral paradoxes of the same philosophers. Good and evil are represented by him as only "authentic," in respect of the human laws defining and constituting them. It belongs to the Christian state to determine what is right and what is wrong. The passages quoted are from Hobbes's original treatise 'De Cive,' and will be found below.[1] But "he gives the same over again in English," our author adds, as follows:—In the state of nature "nothing can be unjust; the notions of right and wrong, justice and injustice, have there

[1] "Doctrinas de justo et injusto, bono et malo, præter leges in unaquaque civitate constitutas authenticas esse nullas," &c. Again,—"Ad civitatem pertinet etiam Christianam quid sit justitia, quid injustitia, sive peccatum contra justitiam determinare."—Libri de Cive, cap. xvii. 10.

no place; where there is no common power, there is no law; where no law, no transgression."[1] "No law can be unjust."[2] "Nay," he continues, "temperance is no more φύσει, 'naturally,' according to this civil (or rather uncivil) philosopher, than justice." "Sensuality, in that sense in which it is condemned, hath no place till there be laws."[3]

From this attitude of philosophical paradox he turns to the views of "divers modern theologers," who, in like manner, deny the absolute and intrinsic character of the ideas of good and evil by attributing them solely to the positive enactment or command of God. Whatever may be the true meaning of the philosophers, he says, as if himself in some degree doubtful whether he had rightly interpreted them, there can be no doubt that there have been theologians who have thus referred all morality to the "arbitrary will and pleasure of God." The ancient Fathers of the Church were indeed "very aborrent from this doctrine," but "it crept up afterward in the scholastic age," and has maintained itself from the time of Ockham, under the pretence of being a necessary corollary from the conception of an Almighty Divine Will. As nothing can be supposed apart from such a will, or as existing independently of it, so good and evil, justice and injustice, can only be as derived from or constituted by God. Curiously

[1] Leviathan, part i. chap. 13. Hobbes's words are, "Where no law, *no injustice*."

[2] Part ii. chap. 30.

[3] Leviathan, part i. chap. 6. Hobbes's exact words are: "The word sensual, as it is used by those only that condemn them [pleasures of sense], having no place till there be laws." They are used parenthetically.

enough, he afterwards distinguishes Descartes as the chief advocate of such a doctrine.

The question being thus stated, he sets forth, for him very briefly, the grounds on which the higher view of morality as in itself something—or a distinct and absolute reality—apart from all human statute or special divine command, appears demonstrable. It is so (1.) because "it is universally true that things are what they are, not by will but by nature." A thing, for example, is white by "whiteness, and black by blackness, triangular by triangularity, and round by rotundity, like by likeness, and equal by equality," —that is, by "such certain natures of their own." Such properties cannot be changed even by Omnipotence without abstracting the things. We cannot have a thing white or black without whiteness or blackness, nor a body triangular without having the nature and properties of a triangle in it. Mere will does not and cannot constitute such things, which are what they are in themselves. And so good and evil, justice and injustice, *debita* and *illicita*, cannot be by mere will—without the nature of goodness, justice, lawfulness. He has no suspicion that he is here merely stating an identical proposition—that what is moral is moral,—that a thing cannot be both moral and without morality,—a proposition which no one would deny. But such a proposition throws no light on the question, why a thing is moral and not immoral? which is the real question betwixt him and his opponents. (2.) Since things are what they are by nature and not mere will, they are "immutably and necessarily what they are." "There is no such

thing as an arbitrarious essence, mode, or relation, that may be made indifferently anything at pleasure; for such an essence is a being without a nature, a contradiction, and therefore a nonentity." [1] Undoubtedly, as a thing cannot be, and not be, at the same time, it is immutably what it is, according to its nature. Take away its nature, and the thing itself disappears. A just act can never be anything but just; but this does not explain why it is just, or rather, why a particular act is pronounced just, and another unjust. (3.) While it is true that a divine or human command in the form of statute may make something which was before indifferent, moral in the sense of "obligatory or unlawful"—yet the real element of morality, even in such a case, does not come from the mere assertion of will, but from "the right or authority of the commander, which is founded in natural justice and equity, and an antecedent obligation to obedience in the subjects. Any law without this natural foundation in right, or for the mere purpose of enforcing the will of one upon others, is properly esteemed "ridiculous and absurd." No true obligation can be constituted in this manner. For "the obligation to obey all positive laws is older than all laws, and previous or antecedent to them." "The bare will of God Himself" cannot beget the obligation to do anything which is not in itself, or "in its own nature, morally good and just." Here our author seems to deal with Hobbes's position more directly, but still too much in the form of mere affirmation, without

[1] B. I. c. ii.

analysis, or going to the root of the matter. (4.) While, therefore, there is such a thing as positive morality, the moral quality of the things which it enjoins transcends the mere will or pleasure that enjoins them. The obligation is not in the mere command, but in the relation of the authority to the intellectual nature commanded. If, for example, a father should order a son to do something, the duty of the son is not constituted by the mere will of the father, but by the fact that it is the very nature of the filial relation to be dutiful and obedient. Or again, the obligation may arise out of our own voluntary act, whereby something in itself indifferent may become to us sacredly obligatory. As when we make a promise to do something which we needed not to have done, the thing promised assumes to us a new relation, and becomes binding on us in the highest degree. It falls under the general law of keeping faith, and acquires all the sanction arising out of the obvious dictates of natural morality. The thing is not changed; it remains in its nature indifferent as before. But *to us* it is changed; and the motive for doing it consists not in the matter of the action, but in the principle of keeping faith. "Wherefore, in positive commands, the will of the commander doth not create any new moral entity, but only divinely modifies and determines that general duty or obligation of natural justice to obey lawful authority, and to keep oaths and covenants, as our own will in promising doth but produce several modifications of keeping faith." [1]

[1] Ibid.

But while moral good and evil are admitted to be independent of any created will, there are those who contend that they "must needs depend upon the arbitrary will of God." Otherwise there would be "something that was not God," or did not take its being from Him. "This is plainly asserted," our author adds, "by that ingenious philosopher, Renatus des Cartes," from whose answer to the sixth objection to his Meditations he quotes, in proof, a passage of some length. The aim of Descartes in the passage is plainly enough to connect everything, including the ideas of good and evil, with the determination of the divine will. It is a contradiction, he says, to imagine anything prior to this determination.[1] Elsewhere in the same answer, he maintains that it is manifest, in the view of the divine immensity, that "there can be nothing at all which does not depend upon God; not only nothing subsisting, but also no order, no law, no reason of truth and goodness.[2] The analysis of the relation of the divine understanding or wisdom to the divine will, is one of those subjects which possessed a fascination for the older schools of philosophy, but which is really quite beyond our penetration or logic. It may be doubted whether sub-

[1] "Repugnat enim Dei voluntatem non fuisse ab æterno indifferentem ad omnia quæ facta sunt, aut unquam fient, quia nullum bonum, vel verum, multumve credendum, vel faciendum, vel omittendum fingi potest. Cujus idea in intellectu divino prius fecerit, quam ejus voluntas se determinavit ad effeciendum ut id tale esset."

[2] "Attendenti ad Dei immensitatem manifestum est, nihil omnino esse posse, quod ab ipso non pendeat, non modo nihil subsistens, sed etiam nullum ordinem, nullam legem, nullamve rationem veri et boni."

These passages will be found in p. 160-162 of the 3d ed. of 'Meditations,' with 'Answers to Objections.' Amsterdam, 1650.

stantially there was, after all, such a difference betwixt Descartes and Cudworth as admits of being clearly apprehended. For the latter, no less than the former, of course, traces the ideas of good and evil, and all those necessary truths of which he makes so much, to a divine source. They exist for us because they are in the mind of God; necessary forms of a perfect and immutable wisdom, in which we imperfectly share. Only he contends that they are before rather than behind the divine will. That is to say, not even the divine will can be conceived unmaking what necessarily *is*, according to the divine mind —converting, for example, two into three, or square or triangular into round, or truth into falsehood, or good into evil. But Descartes did not, or could not, assert this. All that he asserted was, that these things were so because God had made them so. All possible truth has its source in the Divine—only Cudworth conceives the Divine more on the side of mind, a luminous and eternal order; and Descartes (in this case at least) more on the side of will or creative cause. The conception of Cudworth appears the higher and juster of the two, so far as it is possible to separate and compare them. The contemplation of the Divine as a bare will, is inferior in grandeur, and far more liable to abuse, than the contemplation of it as an infinite mind at once wise and good. The former, we agree with our author, is "a contracted idea of God." The Neo-Platonic representation of a divine circle, of which the centre is goodness, the radii wisdom, and the circumference will, is—however "mystical and enig-

matical"—more sublime, and probably also nearer to the truth. The most absolute freedom of the divine will or activity can only be rationally conceived in union with these other attributes, and executive of them. It is the very perfection of this freedom "to be determined by infinite wisdom and goodness."

Having thus dealt directly with the problem of morality, and vindicated to his satisfaction its absolute character, Cudworth expands with his usual amplitude far beyond the limits of the special question. He sees clearly that the real difference of thought in such a case is not merely as to the character and origin of moral ideas, but the character and origin of all ideas. The essential problem is, in fact, the problem of knowledge altogether—whence derived, and whence authenticated? Has our knowledge an element of universal certainty derived from within, innate and co-divine; or is it only particular—such as it appears to every man—gathered and elaborated by the senses, or at most by "the strange chemistry" of some "intellectus agens,"[1] or obscure power acting upon the materials of sense? It is needless to say which side he espouses in this world-old controversy. The remaining three books of the treatise on 'Eternal and Immutable Morality' are devoted to its discussion; and the moral interest, which is yet supreme with him everywhere as a source of inspiration, falls behind the widespread historical and pyschological inquiry into which it carries him.

He treats first of the Protagorean scepticism, which

[1] B. IV., c. i.

made all being and knowledge alike "fantastical and relative only." This brings him again in front of the sensational philosophy, which he has combated at such length in the 'True Intellectual System;' and he explains once more how it is a degenerate and not a true form of "the old atomical and Phœnician philosophy," derived from Moschus or Moses. The same field which we have already traversed is gone over with the same result. In the second book he considers the whole question as betwixt sense and intellection, their different natures, and the impossibility of explaining all our knowledge by the former. The fact of knowledge, distinctively so called, or science, cannot, he contends, emerge from sense. Even outward things or bodies cannot be understood without the co-operation of "reason and intellect judging of the appearances of sense."[1] It "follows from hence," in his own language, "that knowledge is an inward and active energy of the mind itself, and the displaying of its own innate vigour from within, whereby it doth conquer, master, and command its objects."[2] "The mind cannot know anything but by something of its own, that is native, domestic, and familiar to it."[3] This leads him in the concluding book to explain more fully this innate faculty and its appropriate ideas, intellectual and moral. The faculty is clearly distinct from any mere organ of "sense and passion," and marks the whole diameter of difference betwixt man and the brute. The latter is governed solely by its relation to the outer world, and the activities of appetite thence arising. It can have no

[1] B. III., c. iv. [2] B. IV., c. i. [3] Ibid.

sense of anything beyond the impression which corporeal objects make upon it. But man discriminates betwixt himself and the constant flux of outward impressions, and penetrates to their meaning and reality—their harmony, beauty, and music. All the "plenitude" of nature, its "interior symmetry, proportions, aptitudes, and correspondencies," which suggested to the ancients the idea "of Pan (that is, nature) playing upon an harp," are undiscernible to mere sense, which in the brute only perceives particular objects, and hears nothing but mere noise, and sound, and clatter,—no music or harmony at all, —having "no active principle or anticipation within itself" whereby to comprehend all; "whereas the mind of a rational and intellectual being will be ravished and enthusiastically transported in the contemplation, and of its own accord dance to this pipe of Pan—nature's intellectual music and harmony." There is a whole sphere of being in man, therefore, distinct from the brute; and all the characteristic ideas of metaphysics, mathematics, esthetics, and morality, belong to this sphere. They are *νοητὰ* and not *αἰσθητὰ*—the immediate objects of intellection and science—"eternal and immutable" as the source whence they come.

And so he returns in the end to the central thought of all his thinking—the nature of the human soul. Its divine nature and origin make it distinctive, and an organ of higher truth than the mere world of nature can convey or create It is no "mere passive or receptive thing," quickened and formed from without—an educt of matter finely and labori-

ously organised—but a living divine power formed from above, and endowed with the divine image. This is the only basis of all higher knowledge. And so morality and divinity meet and find a common centre. The one cannot be destroyed without destroying the other. Let all knowledge spring from sense, and all morality from utilitarian experience, then man loses the higher side of his being, and sinks back into the world of nature. He loses all foothold of the Divine, and "there cannot possibly be the least shadow of argument to prove a deity by."[1]

IV. The mass and texture of Cudworth's thought are sufficiently before our readers. We must now rapidly gather up the threads of our exposition, and endeavour to estimate his value as a thinker, both for his own time and with reference to the present aspect of the great questions with which he deals. His relations to Hobbes and Descartes have appeared with ample clearness. He is the reactionary creation of the former, in the shadow of whose speculations all his own live and move. If the 'De Cive' and 'Leviathan' had never been written, neither, probably, would have 'The True Intellectual System of the Universe,' nor the treatise on 'Immutable Morality.' The special substance and colour of their thought would certainly never have been what they are. In a lesser but sufficiently distinct manner, he stands in contrast to Descartes, or at least to the more specific and detailed form which Cartesian speculation assumed in the 'Principles of Philosophy,' and 'Objections and Replies.' To the more spiritual

[1] B. IV., conclusion of last chapter.

phase of this speculation—the famous doctrine of Consciousness, with the principle of certitude based upon it, expounded in the discourse 'On Method' and the second 'Meditation'—there is singularly no allusion either in Cudworth or More.[1]

It is impossible not to feel Cudworth's inferiority in originality, clearness, and brightness of conception to both the contemporary thinkers with whom he is thus brought in contrast. It is not only that he comes behind them in the line of his thought, which, but for them, would not have been laid down—that they are the originators of new methods, pioneers in the freshly opened tract of speculative enterprise—while he is only the reviver and defender of an old position. This would not necessarily place them above him; for it is possible, as in the case of Hobbes, to strike into new paths which only lead to old falsehoods, and which, in fact, are, after all, mainly rediscovered traces of old and wrong routes. In the attitude in which Cudworth chiefly contemplates him, Hobbes has no claim to originality. The antagonisms which once more meet in them had been drawn out long before in Democritism on the one side, and Platonism on the other. And if it is different with Descartes—whose whole cast of mind is of an intensely original as well as powerful kind—it is yet the manner rather than the substance of their thought to which we refer when we contrast them with our author in point of originality. Both Descartes and Hobbes always think directly as well as vigorously. They start from a fresh upturned

[1] None that we have traced.

vein of speculation in their own minds, and bring its contents at once before their readers. They have none of the pedantry of learning, and the involved modes of approaching a subject which the Cambridge philosophers have. They have something to say which they think new and important—which they have got not from books, but from insight and meditation—and they say it out unencumbered by the thought of others, or the trammels of scholastic association. Hobbes was aware of this characteristic in his own case, and prided himself on what he had got by thinking, rather than by reading.[1] Descartes is still more than Hobbes the pure thinker. Of all philosophers, perhaps, he is the most directly personal and original, the most independent of all relation to other minds, the most intrepid builder out of the structure of his own thought. This self-possession and freedom give a singular animation and force to his writings, which read to this day as lightly and freshly as when they came from his pen. The style of the 'Discourse' and 'Meditations' runs as smoothly, rapidly, and delicately as that of a modern essayist, while yet every sentence is weighted with meaning, and the whole compacted and vivified by an intense life of thought. To turn from Descartes and Hobbes, as writers, to Cudworth, is in some degree like turning from the bright and open daylight to an obscure labyrinth.

[1] He was wont to say, according to Aubrey, "that if he had read as much as other men, he should have continued still as ignorant as other men."

It must be admitted, also, that Cudworth is hardly fair, and certainly not generously fair, to either of his opponents. He presses frequently the least favourable interpretation of their meaning, and quotes Hobbes, as we have already said, at times with careless inaccuracy.[1] Upon the whole, he must be pronounced deficient in a cordial appreciation of contemporary thought. His allusions to Bacon in the 'Intellectual System' are scarcely more complimentary than those to Hobbes.[2] This may be attributed to the intellectual connection betwixt these philosophers, and the manner in which the author of the 'Leviathan' sometimes sheltered himself under the opinions and statements of the author of the 'Novum Organum;' but it was also probably due to an instinctive dislike of Bacon's method and influence, and especially his manner of treating the relation of philosophy and religion. The Platonic temper could not brook the idea of separation betwixt these two great planes of thought.

At the same time, with all Cudworth's dislike of Hobbes, and the extreme manner in which he sometimes interprets his meaning, it is not to be granted that he seriously misunderstands his drift, or misrepresents the substance of his doctrines. It may be true that theoretically Hobbes did not maintain

[1] It is unnecessary to enumerate instances. The reader will find them pointed out in Mosheim's elaborated notes. A conspicuous instance of his somewhat ungenerous treatment of Descartes is found, c. v., p. 646, 647, folio ed. 1678, in reference to the same passage handled by him in the treatise on 'Immutable Morality,' which we have considered in the text.

[2] See c. v., p. 680, folio ed.

that the civil authority creates morality, and forms its only standard. On the contrary, he frequently speaks of the laws of morality as natural, and attributes to them immutability. "What they forbid can never be lawful, and what they order can never be unlawful."[1] All the same the basis of morality is with him, so to speak, an unmoral basis —unmoral certainly in Cudworth's estimate, because the human nature, out of which he draws it, has no primary moral or divine side. Moral ideas are not, according to him, the translation of divine thought, surviving in man, and connecting him with his divine original, but only a growth from a rudimentary chaos of craving appetites and passions. Not only so. While it is extreme and so far untrue to say that Hobbes attributes all morality to the sovereign will of the state, it is strictly true that he assigns no security or warrant for its observance, save the supreme civil power. If the idea of morality is not represented by him as absolutely originating with the state, yet its exercise can only be conceived under political sanction and control. Man may be theoretically a moral being without the state, but he cannot be so practically. The civil authority does not create the ideas of right and wrong—they are products of our original dispositions; but, without this authority, they have no influence, and cannot be conceived coming into any orderly development. All moral obligation, in short, comes from without, and not from within—from the consensus of political forces which have

[1] De Cive, c. iii. 29.

found an equilibrium in some definite commonwealth, and not from any consensus of divine instincts in men, or common conscience uttering within them the voice of God.

Such a theory was to the Cambridge school radically and entirely false. It implied the denial of a divine side in life. It blotted out at once all true ideas of good and of God. From their point of view it necessarily did so. To Cudworth, it was of no consequence that Hobbes spoke of "natural principles of morality," while he plainly repudiated a spiritual or divine side to human nature. Save as the expression of a higher law than nature, in Hobbes's sense—morality was not to him morality. It did not come within the sphere of true obligation or duty, which can only find its spring in the divine mind (not divine will)—the eternal order or reason which directs and controls all things. This was the essential difference betwixt the two schools of thought; and Cudworth, if he does not sufficiently discriminate Hobbes's position, yet certainly does not misinterpret his essential meaning, as the teacher of a comprehensive system, which sought to build up morality, politics, and religion on an external basis, or an enforced consensus of mere selfish interests, originally at war with one another.

Of religion, no less than morality, Hobbes speaks with deference and reverence. We have already alluded to the manner in which he studs his pages with Scriptural quotations. There are chapters of the 'Leviathan' that look like chapters of Biblical exposition more than anything else. But all this is beside

the purpose. The question is not as to what Hobbes himself was — a Christian or not — orthodox or heterodox. All such personal questions are impertinent in philosophical discussion; and although Cudworth yields to the temptation of speaking disrespectfully of the consequences of Hobbes's opinions, he was far too enlightened to make anything of such personal matters. The real and only question is not what Hobbes was or professed himself to be, but what is the essential meaning and drift of his thought? what are the principles on which his whole system rests—and are they consistent with a rational theory of religion? Can the ideas of morality and the idea of God be rationally sustained on his naturalistic view of human life and society? Is humanity to be primarily and essentially conceived on the side of matter or of mind? This was the question betwixt Cudworth and Hobbes. It included all else. And in supposing Hobbes to occupy one side and himself another on this great question, Cudworth certainly did no injustice to the author of the 'Leviathan.'

Nor can it be denied that with all his faults as a writer, and his slovenliness and cumbrousness as a thinker, Cudworth went to the root of his side of the question, and has done substantially as much to vindicate it as any writer before or since. Both the penetration and the comprehensiveness of his views are apparent everywhere. At a time when the history of philosophy was still unknown as a science, he cast his glance over all the systems of antiquity, and brought their results together, if not critically, yet with an appreciation of their difference and relations which

would be in vain sought for in any other writer of the century. Immersed in Platonic and pseudo-Platonic conceptions which frequently distort his view of the opinions of others, he seldom allowed them to dominate or corrupt his own rational vision. He kept the eye of his own reason single; and it was a large, open, and discerning eye. On the one hand, he sought to purify the conceptions of the popular theology; and, on the other hand, to vindicate for man a genuine sphere of religious and moral idea, in which he could move freely yet feel securely. The rights of reason and of conscience are alike dear to him. He has no conception of truth which cannot be brought to the test of the former, and no indulgence for a philosophy which denies the latter. As religion is not an extravagance, so neither can it be a formality; as it is not a mere dream of pietism, so neither can it be a creation of statecraft. With him, as with Whichcote and Smith, inseparably conjoined with morality—morality again can only be conceived as resting on the Divine, and authenticating itself in God. Man is the creature of God: made in the divine image, endowed with the divine reason, and fitted for divine communion. The intuitions of his reason and the dictates of his conscience are alike indestructible. The ideas of good and evil are as absolute as the axioms of geometry. Both are true, and only true, not as constituted by any personal act—even that of the supreme will—but as expressions of eternal Mind,—the head and ruler of all things. Life, nature, history, thought, are only intelligible in the light of

such a Mind; a central self-consciousness illuminating and controlling all spheres of being—the worlds of matter and of mind. Mind is the originator; matter the originated. To reverse the order, and to make thought the issue instead of the source of material organisation, appeared to Cudworth to blot out all light from the heavens—all hope from man.

It is needless to point out how these questions are as living for us and our time, as they were for Cudworth and his. The very form of them has been slightly altered. Is man a divine creature, or merely the outgrowth of a primitive germ? Is reason a distinct endowment from above, or merely a development of nervous life from below? Is the world, with all its connected species, only a hylozoic evolution, the ages of which no one can reckon; or is it the manifestation of a divine Mind appointing all things in their season? Is it an order of thought, or a blind sequence? And is the original home of man to be sought in a primitive paradise of communion with God, or in the primeval forests of the chimpanzee and the ape? Are we the children of a divine Father, or only the items of a great progress from the unknown to the unknown?

These are the questions which Cudworth pondered; they are those which our age still ponders. If he cannot be said to have solved them, he yet steadily and rationally faced them. He has shown—no one has ever shown better—how we cannot work from below upwards; and that if we begin with matter and a philosophy of sense, we can never reach conscience and a philosophy of reason. He has exhibited

the co-ordination of the different planes of thought, and made it clear how we must stand on the one side or the other. It is not possible perhaps to do more, or to fathom the depths of that dualism that meets us everywhere in the last stages of our inquiry.

If we learn nothing further from Cudworth, we will learn strength, patience, and candour in conducting so great an argument. His form of exposition may be antiquated, but his spirit and reason will never grow old. And if we do not come in his pages nearer to that certainty which some minds are destined never to reach in this world of endless interrogation, we may be helped to trust where we cannot know, to tolerate those who differ from us, and to welcome light and truth from whatever quarter it may come.

V.

HENRY MORE—CHRISTIAN THEOSOPHY AND MYSTICISM.

As the Cambridge movement reached its highest, or at least its most elaborate, intellectual elevation in Cudworth, so it ripened into its finest personal and religious development in Henry More. Cudworth is much less interesting than his writings; More is far more interesting than any of his. He was a voluminous author. His writings fill several folio volumes; they are in verse as well as prose; they were much read and admired in their day; but they are now wellnigh forgotten. Some of them are hardly any longer readable. Yet More himself is at once the most typical and the most vital and interesting of all the Cambridge school. He is the most Platonical of the Platonic sect, and at the same time the most genial, natural, and perfect man of them all. We get nearer to him than any of them, and can read more intimately his temper, character, and manners—the lofty and serene beauty of his personality—one of the most exquisite and charming portraits which the whole history of religion and philosophy presents.

More was born in 1614, three years before Cud-

worth, at Grantham, in Lincolnshire; and we have happily the means of tracing both his external and internal history more familiarly than that of his great colleague.[1] His father was "Alexander More, Esq., a gentleman of fair estate and fortune," greatly beloved and esteemed by his son, who dedicated to him the collection of his 'Philosophical Poems' in 1647. He speaks in his dedication of his father's "generous openness and veracity," and wishes he were a "stranger to his blood," that he "might with a better decorum set out the nobleness of his spirit." He attributes his poetical taste to his father's reading with him in the winter nights 'Spenser's Rhymes,' especially "that incomparable piece of his, 'The Fairy Queen,' a poem as richly fraught with divine morality as phansy." We gather from the same source that, with all his sense of filial obligation, he had broken away from the old home influences, and chosen his career and opinions for himself. Apparently his father had wished him to enter upon some active profession as a road to wealth and influence. But, says the son, "your early encomiums of learning and philosophy did so fire my credulous youth with

[1] In addition to a 'Life by Richard Ward, Rector of Ingoldsby, Lond., 1710, 8vo,' More himself has given us many interesting details of his life in the "Prefatio Generalissima" prefixed to his 'Opera Omnia,' published in 1679; and also "a General Account" of the manner and scope of his writings, in an 'Apology' published in 1664. Ward's Life is interesting, but vague, uncritical, and digressive, after the manner of the time. The second part, which was intended to embrace a review of More's writings, and to consider him more particularly as an author, was never published. The manuscript, however, was in existence in 1847, in the possession of John Crossley, Esq. of Manchester, Editor of Worthington's Diary for the Chetham Society.

the desire of the knowledge of things, that your after advertisements, how contemptible learning would prove without riches, and what a piece of unmannerliness and incivility it would be held to seem wiser than them that are more wealthy and powerful, could never yet restrain my mind from her first pursuit, nor quicken my attention to the affairs of the world."[1]

His change of religious opinion was of more importance. "Both my father and uncle, and so also my mother," he says, "were all earnest followers of Calvin."[2] To the "almost fourteenth year" of his age, he was bred up in strict Calvinism; his tutor, as well as his parents, being of this persuasion—"great Calvinists," he says again,[3] "but withal very pious and good ones." At this age he was sent to "Eton School, not to learn any new precepts or institutes of religion, but for the perfecting of the Greek and Latin tongue." Already, however, he had been the subject of strong religious convictions. "Even in my first childhood, an inward sense of the divine presence was so strong upon my mind, that I did then believe there could no deed, word, or thought be hidden from Him; nor was I by any others that were older than myself to be otherwise persuaded." He has no doubt that this deep, religious feeling was an "innate sense or notion" in him, "contrary to some witless and sordid philosophasters" of the age, or to the supposition that it was merely "*ex traduce*, or by way of propagation, as being born of parents exceeding pious and religious." In such

[1] Epistle to his father, prefixed to 'Philosophical Poems,' 1647.
[2] Pref. Gen., vi.
[3] Ibid., v.

a case, it was inexplicable how he "drew not also Calvinism in along with it." So far from doing this, "he could never swallow that hard doctrine concerning fate." And no sooner had he gone to Eton, than he fell into a violent dispute on the subject with his brother, who had accompanied him and his uncle thither. His uncle, on being informed of his theological precocity and the untoward turn it had taken, chid him very severely, "adding menaces withal of correction, and a rod for my immature forwardness in philosophising concerning such matters."[1] His religious forwardness, however, was not to be restrained in this manner. The mystery of predestination had got hold of his mind, and so possessed him, that "on a certain day, in a ground belonging to Eton College, where the boys used to play and exercise themselves, musing concerning these things with myself, and recalling to my mind the doctrine of Calvin, I did thus seriously and deliberately conclude within myself—viz., 'If I am one of those that are predestinated into hell, where all things are full of nothing but cursing and blasphemy, yet will I behave myself there patiently and submissively towards God; and if there be any one thing more than another that is acceptable to Him, that will I set myself to do with a sincere heart, and to the utmost of my power.' Being certainly persuaded that if I thus demeaned myself, He would hardly keep me long in that place. Which meditation of mine is as firmly fixed in my memory, and the very place where I stood, as if the thing had been transacted but a day or two ago."[2]

[1] Ibid., v. [2] Ibid., v. vi.

"And as to what concerns the existence of God," he adds—"though in that ground mentioned, walking, as my manner was, slowly, and with my head on one side, and kicking now and then the stones with my feet, I was wont sometimes with a sort of musical and melancholic murmur to repeat, or rather hum to myself those verses of Claudian :—

> 'Oft hath my anxious mind divided stood;
> Whether the Gods did mind this lower world;
> Or whether no such ruler (wise and good)
> We had; and all things here by chance were hurled.'[1]

Yet that exceeding hail and entire sense of God, which nature herself had planted deeply in me, very easily silenced all such slight and poetical dubitations as these."[2]

Personal as these details are, there is nothing egotistical in them. They are naturally and simply told, after the manner of the time. Such moods are for the most part left untold. The reserve of after-years and many experiences seldom permits the veil to be lifted upon the early secrets of the soul. But More, both as a boy and as a man, was singularly transparent in his deepest nature. His communings and ecstasies have not the slightest taint of morbid self-elation. They are the natural carriage of his strangely-gifted spirit. "From the beginning all things in a manner came flowing to him;" and his

[1] The translation in the text is by his biographer. Claudian's words are—

"Sæpe mihi dubiam traxit sententia mentem;
Curarent Superi terras; an nullus inesset
Rector, et incerto fluerent Mortalia casu."

[2] Pref. Gen., vi.

mind—according to his own saying—"was enlightened with a sense of the noblest theories in the morning of his days."

His scholarly progress as a boy seems to have been remarkable—although here we have few facts related. "His master would be at times in admiration at the exercises that were done by him." His "anxious and thoughtful genius"[1] showed itself in his work as well as in his meditations; and his varied and profuse scholarship could only have been the fruit of diligent study at Eton as well as afterwards at the university.

Having spent about three years at Eton, he was admitted at Christ's College, Cambridge (1631), just about the time that Milton was leaving it. He was recommended to the care of a tutor "both learned and pious," and, what he was "not a little solicitous about, not at all a Calvinist." Here, he says, he was possessed with a "mighty and almost immoderate thirst after knowledge—especially that which was *Natural*, and, above all others, that which was said to dive into the deepest Cause of Things." He immersed himself "over head and ears in the study of philosophy, promising himself the most wonderful happiness in the perusal of Aristotle, Cardan, Julius Scaliger, and other philosophers of the greatest note." He professes, however, to have got little satisfaction from the reading of such authors. The result of his four years' studies of this kind was that he fell into a sort of scepticism—not, as he carefully tells us, regarding the existence of God or the duties

[1] Divine Dialogues, iii. 27.

of morality—"for of these he never had the least doubt;" but regarding the origin and end of life. He was puzzled like many a young dreamer before him as to the meaning of existence, and what were its shows, and what its substance. He expressed his feelings in a Greek epigram, under the title Ἀπορία, which he afterwards himself translated :—

"Know I:
Nor whence nor who I am, poor wretch!
Nor yet—oh, madness!—whither I must goe:
. . . . . .
Lies, night-dreams, empty toys, fear, fatal love,
This is my life: I nothing else do see."

This unhappy state of mental disturbance lasted until he had taken his Bachelor's degree in 1635. After that he fell anew to thinking with himself "whether the knowledge of things was really the supreme felicity of man or something *greater or more divine* was. Or, supposing it to be so, whether it was to be acquired by such an eagerness and intentness in the reading of authors, and contemplating of things—or by the purgation of the mind from all sorts of vices whatsoever." This new train of thought was greatly encouraged, if not excited, by his study of the "Platonic writers, Marsilius Ficinus,[1] Plotinus himself, Mercurius Trismegistus,[2]

[1] Marsilius Ficinus was one of the well-known school of Florentine Platonists who composed the brilliant circle which surrounded the Medici in the fifteenth century. He translated Plato and Plotinus, with other Neo-Platonic writers, and, like More himself, sought to amalgamate their theology with Christianity.

[2] Trismegistus was an epithet given to the Egyptian Hermes. Numerous philosophical and astrological works bore this name in the early Christian centuries, and purported to be written under

and the mystical divines, among whom there was frequent mention made of the purification of the soul, and of the purgative course that is previous to the illuminative." He was greatly fascinated by these writers; and the fascination was one which never left him. They opened up a congenial world of thought to his richly meditative mind, while their transcendental pietisms exactly met the aspirations of his mystic and enthusiastic spirit. But "amongst all the writings of this kind, there was none so pierced and affected" him "as that golden little book with which Luther is also said to have been wonderfully taken — viz., 'Theologia Germanica.'" Something of defect he recognised in this marvellous manual—"a certain deep melancholy, as also no slight errors in matters of philosophy;" but its great lesson of self-renunciation aroused and quickened his whole being "as it were out of sleep." Henceforth he was "most firmly persuaded, not only concerning the existence of God, but also of His absolute both goodness and power, and of His most real will that we should be perfect, even as our Father which is in heaven is perfect." And so a violent conflict was awakened in him betwixt "the divine principle and the animal nature,"—a conflict which he represents as the very "*punctum saliens*, or first motion of the new life or birth begun in us." "As to other performances," he adds, "whether of morality or religion arising from mere self-love, let

divine inspiration. They were mostly written at Alexandria by Gnostic Christians or philosophers of the Neo-Platonic school, probably in the fourth century of the Christian era.

them be as specious or goodly as you please, they are at best but as preparations, or the more refined exercises of a sort of *theological Hobbianisme.*"

The result was, that all More's other studies became of no value in comparison with the course of spiritual discipline upon which he now entered. It was his earnest effort in all things to subdue his own will to the divine will, and cherish within him the seed of the divine life. He felt that "the *divine seed* alone is that which is acceptable unto God—and the sole invincible basis of all true religion." His former "insatiable desire and thirst after the knowledge of things" became almost wholly extinguished. He was "solicitous about nothing so much as a more full union with the divine and celestial principle, the inward flowing wellspring of life eternal—with the most fervent prayers breathing often unto God that He would be pleased thoroughly to set him free from the dark chains and sordid captivity of his own will." And no sooner strangely had he entered upon this course, and his immoderate desire after mere knowledge been allayed, than he began to have a clearer assurance of those very things which he had desired to know. Gradually light as well as peace came to him. "Within a few years" he "got into a most joyous and lucid state of mind"—the very antithesis of his former state. As he had described his darkness and embarrassment in an epigram[1]—so now also he describes his relief and satisfaction :—

[1] Both epigrams were originally written in Greek — the latter under the title of Εὐπορία, as the former under that of Ἀπορία. They are both found at the end of his 'Philosophical Poems.'

"I come from heaven; am an immortal ray
Of God; O joy! and back to God shall go.
And here sweet love on's wings me up doth stay.
I live, I'm sure; and joy this life to know.
Night and vain dreams begone: Father of lights
We live, as Thou, clad with eternal day.
Faith, wisdom, love, fix'd joy, free winged might,
This is true life: all else death and decay."

More's period of scepticism seems to have lasted for three or four years following his graduation. All that we distinctly know is the spiritual character of the rest which he reached, and that its full attainment was marked by the composition of his first philosophical poem. "I was fully convinced," he says,[1]—a conviction which lies at the basis of all his higher thought,—"that true holiness was the only safe entrance into divine knowledge." And not content with expressing his thoughts in the epigram we have already given, he "afterwards, about the beginning of the year 1640, comprised his chief speculations and experiences in a pretty full poem called 'Psychozoia, or the Life of the Soul.'" He had no intention at first of publishing this poem; but at length he yielded, as so many have done before and since, to the "instigation of some learned and pious friends," who had accidentally come to know of it. It was published accordingly for the first time in 1642, along with another poem of considerable length, entitled "Psychathanasia; or, the second part of the Song of the Soul, treating of the Immortality of Souls, especially Man's Soul." Finally, four other

[1] Pref. to 'Mystery of Godliness.'

poems on kindred subjects,[1] along with several minor poems, were added, and the complete collection of 'Philosophical Poems' appeared in 1647, when he was thirty-three years of age.

More's poems are now hardly known; they have fallen out of the rank which even the poems of Donne and Davies maintain, and are not found in any collection. In some respects they form the most singular attempt in literature to turn metaphysics into poetry. Apart from the "notes" and "interpretation general," which he has himself happily furnished, they are barely intelligible. Even with such assistance they are a most intricate and perplexing study. Not only the strain of thought and complexities of Neo-Platonic allusion, but the involutions and phantasies of the verse itself, contribute to this. Yet there are here and there not a few genuine gleams both of poetic and spiritual insight; and the mental picture which the poems present is altogether so curious as to reward the patience of a congenial student. No one unless such a student, animated in some degree by the "Platonic rage," from which they "powerfully flow forth," need at-

[1] The titles of these four poems, which are more or less closely connected with his primary "Song of the Soul," may interest the reader. 1. "Democritus Platonissans; or an Essay upon the Infinity of Worlds out of Platonic principles. Annexed to this second Part of the Song of the Soul." 2. "Antipsychopannychia; or the Third Book of the Song of the Soul: containing a confutation of the Sleep of the Soul after Death." 3. "The Præ-existency of the Soul —an Appendix to Third Part of the Song of the Soul." 4. "Antimonopsychia; or the Fourth Part of the Song of the Soul, containing a Confutation of the Unity of Souls."

tempt them. The eye must be profound as well as "clear," which would penetrate their "deep searching thoughts often renewed." The reader is to expect, as he himself duly warms—

"No Teian strain,
No light wanton Lesbian vein."

His is a far nobler function than that of the ordinary poet.

"Nor ladies' loves, nor knights' brave martiall deeds,
Ywrapt in rolls of hid antiquitie;
But th' inward fountain, and the unseen seeds,
From whence are these and what so under eye
Doth fall, or is record in memorie,
Psyche, I'll sing. Psyche! from thee they sprong.
O life of Time and all Alterity!
The life of lives instill his nectar strong,
My soul t'inebriate, while I sing *Psyche's* song.

. . . . . .
. . . . My task is not to try
What's simply true. I onely do engage
Myself to make a fit discovery,
Give some fair glimpse of Plato's hid Philosophy.

What man alive that hath but common wit
(When skilfull limmer suing his intent
Shall fairly well pourtray and wisely hit
The true proportion of each lineament,
And in right colours to the life depaint
The fulvid eagle with her sun-bright eye),
Would wexen wroth with inward choler brent
Cause 'tis no buzard or discolour'd Pie?
Why man? I meant it not: cease thy fond obloquie.

So if what's consonant to Plato's school
(Which well agrees with learned Pythagore,
Egyptian Trismegist, and th' antique roll
Of Chaldee wisdome, all which time hath tore,

But Plato and deep Plotin do restore),
Which is my scope, I sing out lustily:
If any twitten me for such strange lore,
And me all blamelesse brand with infamy,
God purge that man from fault of foul malignity."

The philosophical doctrines of the poems will sufficiently appear as we proceed. For, like all his school, More uses up again and again his fundamental ideas; and the "Platonic principles," which he turned into song in his early years, were the same which he handled afterwards in various forms of prose. We may give, however, a few further extracts, some of which condense in pregnant fragments the pith of his thought, while others, by a happy chance, attain true poetic form—golden threads of simple thought or feeling tracing the "wastful woods"—the harsh involvements—of his verse.[1]

"Hence the soul's nature we may plainly see:
A beam it is of th' Intellectual Sun.
A ray indeed of that Æternity;
But such a ray as when it first out shone,
From a free light its shining date begun.[2]

If then, said he, the spirit may not be
Right reason, surely we must deem it sense.
Yes, sense it is, this was my short reply.
Sense upon which holy Intelligence

[1] He did not himself estimate his poetic power highly when the fit of composition was over.

"A rude confused heap of ashes dead
My verses seem, when that Celestial flame,
That sacred Spirit of Life's extinguished
In my cold breast. Then 'gin I rashly blame
My rugged lines: this word is obsolete;
That boldly coyn'd; a third too oft doth beat
Mine humorous ears."

[2] The Life of the Soul, cant. ii. 22.

And heavenly Reason and comely Prudence
(O beautious branches of that root divine!)
Do springen up, through inly experience
Of God's hid wayes, as he doth ope the ey'n
Of our dark souls, and in our hearts his light enshrine.[1]

If light divine we know by divine light,
Nor can by any other means it see,
This ties their hands from force that have the spirit.[2]

But yet my Muse, still take an higher flight,
Sing of Platonick Faith in the first Good,
That faith that doth our souls to God unite
So strongly, tightly, that the rapid flood
Of this swift flux of things, nor with foul mud
Can stain, nor strike us off from th' unity,
Wherein we steadfast stand, unshak'd, unmov'd,
Engrafted by a deep vitality.
The prop and stay of things in God's benignity.[3]

When I myself from mine own self do quit
And each thing else; then an all-spreaden love
To the vast Universe my soul doth sit,
Makes me half equall to All-seeing Jove.
My mightie wings high stretch'd then clapping light
I brush the starres and make them shine more bright."[4]

The following are not without a genuine touch of fancy and poetic skill:—

"I saw pourtrai'd on this sky-coloured silk
Two lovely Lads with wings fully dispread
Of silver plumes, their skins more white than milk,
Their lilly limbs I greatly admired,
Their cheary looks and lusty livelyhed:

[1] Ibid., ii. 99.
[2] Ibid., ii. 105.
[3] The Immortality of the Soul, Book III., cant. iv.
[4] Cupid's Conflict.

Athwart their snowy brest, a scarf they wore
Of azure hew.[1]

By this the sun's bright waggon 'gan ascend
The eastern hill, and draw on chearful day;
So I full fraught with joy do homeward wend
And fed myself with that that Nymph did say,
And did so cunningly to me convey,
Resolving for to teach all willing men
Life's mysterie, and quite to chase away
Mind-mudding mist sprung from low fulsome fen:
Praise my good will, but pardon my weak falt'ring pen."[2]

It was about this same period of his life that More believed himself to have had a curious vision, which he afterwards recounted under the name of *Bathynous* in his 'Divine Dialogues.' There cannot be any reasonable doubt that he speaks of himself under the name; and there is so much that is characteristic in the story—it gives us such an insight into his clear, confiding, and enthusiastic spirit—that we shall quote it at some length for its biographic significance. It occurs in the third of the series of his 'Divine Dialogues.' He is discussing with his interlocutors the subject of the divine goodness, when he informs them that he had a strange dream in his youth of "an old man with a grave countenance speaking to him in a wood;" and on being importuned to tell his dream, he agrees to do so as "exquisitely and briefly" as he can. "You must know, then, of what an anxious and thoughtful genius I was from my very childhood, and what a deep and strong sense I had of the existence of God, and what an

[1] The Life of the Soul, cant. i. 26.

[2] The Immortality of the Soul, B. I., cant. vi. 31.

early conscientiousness of approving myself to Him ; and how, when I had arrived to riper years of reason, and was imbued with some slender rudiments of philosophy, I was not then content to think of God in the gross only, but began to consider His nature more distinctly, accurately, and to contemplate and compare His attributes ; and how, partly from the natural sentiments of my own mind, partly from the countenance and authority of Holy Scripture, I did confidently conclude that infinite power, wisdom, and goodness, were the chiefest and most comprehensive attributes of the divine nature, and that the sovereign of these was His goodness, the summity and power, as I may so speak, of the divinity. In the mean time, being versed in no other natural philosophy nor metaphysicks but the vulgar, my mind was for a long time charged with inextricable puzzles and difficulties, to make the phenomena of the world and vulgar opinions of men in any tolerable way to comport or suit with these two chiefest attributes of God, His wisdom and His goodness. These meditations closed mine eyes at night ; these saluted my memory at first in the morning ; these accompanied my remote and solitary walks into fields and woods, sometimes so early as when most of other mortals keep their beds.

" It came to pass, therefore, that one summer morning having rose much more early than ordinary, and having walk'd so long in a certain wood (which I had a good while frequented) that I thought fit to rest myself on the ground, having spent my spirits partly by long motion of my body, but mainly by want of sleep, and over-anxious and solicitous think-

ing of such difficulties as Hylobares (one of the speakers in the dialogues) either has already, or, as I descry'd at first, is likely to propose; I straitway reposed my weary limbs amongst the grass and flowers at the foot of a broad-spread flourishing oak, where the gentle fresh morning air played in the shade on my heated temples, and with unexpressible pleasure refrigerating my blood and spirits, and the industrious bees busily humming round about me upon the dewy honeysuckles; to which nearer noise was most melodiously joined the distant singings of the chearful birds re-echoed from all parts of the wood; these delights of nature all conspiring together, you may easily fancy, would quickly charm my weary body into a profound sleep. But my soul was then as much as ever awake, and, as it seems, did most vividly dream that I was still walking in these solitary woods with my thoughts more eagerly intent upon those usual difficulties of providence than ever. But while I was in this great anxiety and earnestness of spirit, accompanied (as frequently when I was awake) with vehment and devout suspirations and ejaculations towards God, of a sudden there appeared at a distance a very grave and venerable person walking slowly towards me. His stature was greater than ordinary. He was clothed with a loose silk garment of a purple colour, much like the Indian gowns that are now in fashion, saving that the sleeves were something longer and wider; and it was tied about him with a Levitical girdle also of purple; and he wore a pair of velvet slippers of the same colour, but upon his head a Montero of black velvet, as if he were

both a traveller and an inhabitant of that place at once.

"While he was at any distance from me, I stood fearless and unmoved; only, in reverence to so venerable a personage, I put off my hat, and held it in my hand. But when he came up closer to me, the vivid fulgour of his eyes that shone so piercingly bright from under the shadow of his black Montero, and the whole air of his face, though joined with a wonderful deal of mildness and sweetness, did so of a sudden astonish me, that I fell into an excessive trembling, and had not been able to stand if he had not laid his hand upon my head, and spoken comfortably to me, which he did in a paternal manner, saying,—'Blessed be thou of God, my son; be of good courage, and fear not; for I am a messenger of God to thee for thy good. Thy serious aspires and breathings after the true knowledge of thy Maker and the ways of His providence (which is the most becoming employment of every rational being), have ascended into the sight of God; and I am appointed to give into thy hands the two keys of Providence, that thou mayest thereby be able to open the treasure of that wisdom thou so anxiously and yet so piously seekest after.' And wherewithal he put his right hand into his left sleeve, and pulled out two shining bright keys—the one silver, the other of gold, tied together with a sky-coloured ribbon of a pretty breadth—and delivered them into my hands, which I received of him, making low obeisance, and professing my thankfulness for so great a gift."

By this time, he tells us, he had acquired so much

confidence and familiarity as to be able to converse with the venerable figure which had appeared to him. Having received first the silver key into his hand, he was instructed to observe the letters written on it, which, when formed into a sentence or motto, proved to be *Claude fenestras, ut luceat domus.* He then, holding the lower part of the key in his left hand, pulled at the handle with his right, when there came out a silver tube with a scroll of thin paper, "but as strong as any vellum, and as white as driven snow." On this paper was sketched what, according to his somewhat elaborate description, was obviously designed to be a representation of the motions of the planetary bodies round the sun, and of the starry hemisphere—a sort of revelation of the Copernican or true system of the universe. His attention was then specially drawn to the motto of the golden key, which was a "treasure of itself." It was *Amor Dei Lux Animæ.* A golden tube with a similar scroll of paper disclosed itself, when he pressed, as before, the handle of this key, on which were inscribed twelve sentences written with letters of gold, to such effect as the following :—Divine goodness is commensurate with divine providence or infinite; Time and Space —'the thread of time and the expansion of the universe'—proceed from a benevolent Deity; Intellectual Spirits rejoiced with God before creation; in a world of free agents, sin must be a possibility; but happiness exceeds sin and misery 'as much as the light exceeds the shadows.' He was proceeding with his analysis of these divine sentences, when he was rudely interrupted by the braying of two asses, and

the bright vision of the "aged grave personage, the silver and golden keys, and glorious parchment" suddenly vanished, when he found himself sitting alone at the bottom of the oak where he had fallen asleep—an ass on each side of him!

We confess, with one of the interlocutors, that we are somewhat at a loss to understand the moral of this singular interruption of his vision, the ludicrous absurdity of which strikes us at first more than anything else; unless it be intended, as he himself half hints, to signify the indifferent noisiness with which the world, and even the Church, often receive and interrupt the speculations of a higher thoughtfulness striving to read, from the charactered scroll of nature and life, the mysteries of being. More professes that the completed vision would have been too much for him, and that he was more gratified at things happening as they did than if he had been all at once put in possession of Truth—the continued search for which had been to him a repeated and prolonged pleasure.

One of the speakers—"a zealous but airy-minded Platonist and Cartesian, or Mechanist"—suggests that the object of the vision was not merely to attest the Copernican system of the world, but the truth of Descartes' principles. But More, in the name of Bathynous, repudiates this view on the ground that he espied in one of the sentences or aphorisms of the golden key, which he had not time to read in full, the statement, "*That the primordials of the world are not mechanical, but spermatical or vital*," which, he adds, "is diametrically and fundamentally opposite to Descartes' philosophy." He is

convinced further, that, if he had had full conference with the divine sage, he would have found his philosophy "more Pythagorical or Platonical than Cartesian. For there was also mention of the seminal soul of the world, which some modern writers call the spirit of nature." The aphoristic revelations, both of the silver and the golden key, gave rise to a great deal more discussion amongst the friends assembled in Cuphophron's "philosophical bower"—a delightful retreat of the "airy-minded Platonist"—with the cool evening summer air "fanning itself through the leaves of the arbour," and a "frugal collation" spread—"a cup of wine, a dish of fruit, and a manchet."[1] The rest was made up with "free discourses in philosophy." The picture is a pleasant one, if the dialogue is sometimes tiresome; and the whole vision and description are strikingly illustrative of the dreamy ideal enthusiasm with which the young Platonist pursued his studies and inquiries.

More's poems, we have seen, were first published in 1642. He had previously taken his Master's degree in 1639; and immediately afterwards was chosen Fellow of his college. This was his first promotion, and it may almost be said to have been his last. Many offers of preferment were subsequently made to him; but he persistently refused them all, with one exception. Fifteen years after the Restoration, or in 1675, he accepted a prebend in Gloucester cathedral, only to resign it almost immediately in favour of Dr Edward Fowler, after-

[1] A small loaf of fine bread. toast of manchet, dipped in oil of "Take," says Bacon, "a small sweet almonds," &c.

wards the well-known Bishop of Gloucester. The suspicion was, that More only accepted the office in order to pass it on to Fowler. He patronised not only Fowler, but Worthington, whom he appointed to the rectory of Ingoldsby, in Lincolnshire, the advowson of which he had inherited from his father. Apparently he held this living himself for a short time;[1] but he had no love for any work beyond the gates of his college. He had no ambition, and steadily declined every attempt to draw him into a public position. He would not even accept the mastership of his college, to which it is understood he would have been preferred in 1654, when Cudworth was appointed. Other offers of the provostship of Trinity College, Dublin, and the deanery of St Patrick's, shared the same fate. He had set his heart on the quiet privacy of his life as a Fellow, and as such he lived and died. The precincts of Christ's College remained his home, and here, it is said, he had made a sort of paradise for himself. Noble friends importuned him; the royal favour even solicited him to accept some office more worthy of his reputation. "Pray be not so morose," one noble person is represented as saying, "or humoursome, as to refuse all things you have not known so long as Christ's College." But he was not to be moved. His friends even got him "on a day as far as Whitehall, in order to the kissing of the royal hand;" but

[1] Ward says,—"This living he was possessed of, I suppose, for some very short time; for I find his name once to the public register *anno* 1642, but whether of his own writing I cannot certainly say."

when he understood that the condition of his doing so was the acceptance of a bishopric, "he was not upon any account to be persuaded to it." We have often heard of the *Nolo Episcopari;* but it is seldom it is exemplified in so simple and honest a way as this—by running away from the unwelcome offer.

Soon after he became Fellow of Christ's College, he seems to have acted as tutor to several persons of "great quality." "His deep thoughtfulness did not take him off from all that due care that was any way requisite for the discharge of so great a trust." His biographer speaks on the authority of personal knowledge and letters which had passed betwixt More and some of his pupils, one of whom told him in particular, "what excellent lectures he would deliver to them of *Piety* and *Instruction*, from the chapter that was read on nights in his chamber." Others "confirmed" the same report; and we can easily understand the hearty bonds of sympathy which would unite such a tutor and young men of a refined and thoughtful turn of mind. But amongst all his pupils, the most interesting was a young lady of noble family—a "heroine pupil," as his biographer says, "of an extraordinary nature." This lady appears to have been a sister of Heneage, Lord Finch, afterwards Earl of Nottingham, Chancellor and Lord Keeper under Charles II.,[1] a well-known statesman of great legal ability and eloquence, who,

[1] This is expressly stated (Chalmers's Biog. Dict.); but Ward, More's biographer, speaks of a Sir John Finch, Ambassador at the Ottoman Court, and an early pupil of More's, of whom we can learn nothing.

with something of the harshness and subserviency of his age, maintained a high personal character, and was animated by genuine and lofty religious aspirations.[1] Thus distinguished by birth, More's favourite pupil married Lord Conway, and settled at Ragley, in Warwickshire, where "at intervals he spent a considerable part of his time." He had the highest esteem for her, and the feeling was mutual, notwithstanding causes of difference which arose betwixt them. He was wont to say "that he scarce ever met with any person, man or woman, of better natural parts than the Lady Conway;" and she in her turn had an "extraordinary value" for his genius. Her husband was scarcely less enthusiastic, and is said to have treasured everything of More's "with as much reverence as if it were Socrates'." It is added, that "as she always wrote a very clear style, so would she argue sometimes, or put to him the deepest and noblest queries imaginable."

Lady Conway was of delicate constitution, and appears to have suffered much, particularly from "pains and disorders in her head." Her bodily infirmity, as in many similar cases, had developed her

[1] In evidence of this, it is enough to mention that Cudworth's 'Intellectual System' was dedicated to Lord Finch, in acknowledgment of "his hearty affection for religion, and zeal for it." Cudworth also speaks highly of his eloquence; while Pepys says, "He was a man of as great eloquence as ever I heard, or ever hoped to hear in all my life." The main evidence of his harshness is a saying attributed to him when Andrew Marvell proposed that the fees incurred by Milton during his brief custody after the Restoration should be refunded by Parliament. "No," said Finch; "Milton had been Latin secretary to Cromwell, and instead of paying £150, he well deserved hanging."

spiritual enthusiasm, and she gradually passed from More's pupilage into the ranks of the Quakers. This was a great blow and discouragement to him; and he entered into many arguments, not only with her, but with her Quaker friends. He wrote a letter to Penn concerning Baptism and the Lord's Supper, and even tried a discussion with "their great leader, George Fox." But Fox, either by his rudeness or his ignorance, proved too much for him. He said to some one, "*that in conversing with him, he felt himself, as it were, turned into brass*, so much did the spirit, crookedness, or perverseness of that person move and offend his mind." [1] More failed to reconvert his pupil, but he retained her friendship. He continued to spend much of his time, as before, at Ragley "and its woods," and there composed several of his books, at Lady Conway's "own desire and instigation." When she died, she left him a legacy; and he, on the other hand, drew an interesting portrait of her in the form of a preface to a volume of remains of her genius, which at one time it was designed to publish. He drew this portrait under another name, and with so much address, that we are told "the most rigid Quaker would see everything they could wish in it, and yet the soberest Christian be entirely satisfied with it." [2]

Lady Conway was evidently a remarkable person, and there is some reason to think that she exercised a greater influence upon More than his biographer is willing to confess. Her mysticism was in close

[1] Ward's Life, p. 197.

[2] The preface was written under the name of Van Helmont, and is printed at length in Ward's Life.

affinity with one side of his religious nature. She had studied in Latin "both Plato and Plotinus," and "searched into, and judiciously sifted, the abstrusest writers of theosophy."[1] But to her mysticism she plainly united a vigorous and confident will. More himself said "that she was one that would not give up her judgment entirely unto any." Such a character—enthusiastic, yet self-reliant—of subtle spiritual insight, chastened by suffering, and yet of firm purpose, naturally exerted a great attraction for an intelligence like More's, free and rational, yet mobile and restlessly sympathetic. Her genius and generous force of thought charmed him, and probably influenced and stimulated him more than he imagined; and the fact that he wrote so many of his books at Ragley may be taken as clear evidence of this.

But Ragley was the seat of other influences besides those of a congenial and thoughtful mistress. Spiritualism found a favourite abode in it, in the shape not only of religious enthusiasm, but of gifts and wonders which seemed to many little else than miraculous. In addition to the "best and chiefest of the Quakers," its society embraced two of the most extraordinary men of the time, Baron Van Helmont, and the "no less famous" Valentine Greatrakes, with both of whom More made special acquaintance in this pleasant retreat. The former is not to be confounded with the well-known chemist of the same name, who, following in the footsteps of Paracelsus, did much, with all his extravagances, to advance the

[1] More's Preface.

study of natural science in the first half of the seventeenth century.[1] The Van Helmont who was More's associate, and in whose person and name he wrote the panegyric of Lady Conway to which we have already adverted, was the son of this distinguished chemist. He inherited something of his father's genius, but more of his enthusiasm and extravagance. He seems to have devoted himself solely to those occult medical studies which were a secondary passion with his parent, and to have lived for some time in Lady Conway's family as physician. He was greatly attached, along with his friend and patroness, to the Quakers, and attended their meetings frequently. From all we learn of him, it is difficult to get a real view of his character. More's remark might lead us to infer that he was either a pure, unconscious enthusiast, or a well-intentioned, self-denying philanthropist. "He knew as little of himself, truly and really," More says, "as one that had never seen him in his life."

Greatrakes is a comparatively well-known person, —his name being one of the most celebrated in that strange history of occult marvels which is so far from having run its course that our age, with all its enlightenment, is likely to add to it one of its most startling and memorable chapters. His wonderful cures made even more noise in the seventeenth century than any similar phenomena have yet done in

[1] Jean Baptist Van Helmont was a gentleman of Brabant, and Lord of Merode, &c. He was born in Brussels in 1577, and passed most of his time on his Flemish estate, engaged in the researches of his laboratory. He died in 1644.

the nineteenth. They were the subject of formal investigation by the Royal Society, and quite carried away men like More and Glanvill, both of whom have specially adverted to them.[1] Greatrakes was a native of Ireland—a gentleman of liberal birth and fortune, well educated, and apparently possessed both of public and private virtues. There is no reason to doubt his honesty. At first it is said that he was far from eager to exert the strange powers with which he felt himself endowed. But at length the impulse became too powerful for him, and having tried his skill on some persons in the neighbourhood of his residence, the effect was so marked that sick people flocked to him from all quarters. He cured them in the most extraordinary manner, merely by laying his hands upon them and stroking them. Lady Conway's sufferings led her to invite him to England, where his success was no less astonishing, *save in her own case.* His performances became the talk of town and country; and his reputation was keenly canvassed. "At the coffee-houses and everywhere," writes "a person of great veracity and a philosopher" to Glanvill, "the great discourse now is about Mr G., the famous Irish stroker. He undergoes curious censures here; some take him to be a conjuror, and some an impostor, but others, again, adore him as an apostle. I confess, I think, the man is free from all design, of a very agreeable conversation, not addicted to any vice, nor to any sect or party; but is, I believe, a

[1] The former in the notes to his Latin version of 'Enthusiasmus Triumphatus,' and the latter in his well-known publication on Witchcraft.

sincere Protestant. I was three weeks together with him at my Lord Conway's, and saw him (I think) lay his hands upon a thousand persons; and really there is something in it more than ordinary; but I am convinced 'tis not miraculous. I have seen pains strangely fly before his hand till he hath chased them out of the body; dimness cleared and deafness cured by his touch; twenty persons at several times, in fits of the falling-sickness, were in two or three minutes brought to themselves, so as to tell where their pain was; and then he hath pursued it till he hath driven it out at some extreme part: running sores of the king's evil dried up, and kernels brought to a puration by his hand." "Yet," adds Glanvill, agreeing in this respect with his friend More, "I have many reasons to persuade me that nothing of all this is miraculous. He pretends not to give testimony to any doctrine; the manner of his operation speaks it to be natural, the cure seldom succeeds without reiterated touches, his patients often relapse, he fails frequently, he can do nothing where there is any decay in nature, and many distempers are not at all obedient to his touch. So that I confess I refer all his vertue to his particular temper and complexion; and I take his spirits to be a kind of elixir and universal ferment, and that he cures (as Dr M. expresseth it) by a sanative contagion."[1]

More had a strong faith, as many men of genius have had, in what may be called the sanatory virtue of rare personal gifts, whether of mind or of body. With the most unaffected candour—a candour so

[1] Sadducismus Triumph., p. 583. 1726.

perfectly simple as to be to our modern tastes ludicrous — he expresses his belief that he was himself endowed in a remarkable degree with such gifts. Like Socrates, he had his monitory counsellings and warnings—impulses borne in upon his spirit in an irresistible and "more than ordinary manner." Frequently in his writings such impulses would come to him, and lead him in a different line of thought from that which he had intended, "when he saw afterwards that the way he was going would have led him into what he calls "an Angiportus," or position of difficulty. "He was in a very great rapture when he was thus affected." It is added by his biographer[1] that he was "not a little shy in speaking of matters of this nature;" that it was only occasionally to his most intimate friends that he would do so; and that there was good reason to believe that he was more frequently moved in such a manner "than he hath anyhow particularly related." His vivid realisation of the spiritual world, and the presence of higher powers everywhere encircling human life, made it natural and easy for him to believe such things.

His belief in what he declared to be the strange properties of his body is of a more remarkable kind. He has himself placed on deliberate record, in speaking of Greatrakes's singular endowments, that certain products of his own person "had naturally the flavour of violets; that his breast and body, especially when very young, would of themselves, in like manner, send forth flowery and aromatick odours from them, and such as he daily

[1] Ward, p. 130.

almost was sensible of, when he came to put off his clothes and go to bed. And even afterwards, when he was older, about the end of winter or beginning of the spring, he did frequently perceive certain sweet and herbaceous smells about him, when yet there were no such external objects near from whence they could proceed."[1] Whatever explanation may be given of this curious story, More himself supposed the results to arise from the peculiar virtue of his temperament and constitution. *Anima sicca, anima pura; anima sicca, sapientissima*—he was wont to say, repeating an ancient aphorism, and explaining that a "dry constitution," such as he had, was naturally the seat of the purest and wisest mind. Undoubtedly he had a singularly healthy and elastic bodily frame, fitted as "a well-strung instrument to his soul." "It seemed built for a hundred years;" and as he further says of himself, "there were not many that could have borne that high warmth and activity of thoughtfulness and intense writing." "After all his study and depth of thought in the day-time, when he came to sleep he had a strange sort of *narcotic power* (as his word was), that drew him to it; and he was no sooner in a manner laid in his bed, but the falling of a house would scarce wake him. When yet early in the morning he was wont to awake usually into an immediate unexpressible life and vigour, with all his thoughts and notions raying about him, as beams surrounding the centre from whence they all proceed." He had so tempered and attuned his body that it

[1] Schol. in Enthus. Triumph., sect. 58.

readily obeyed all the movements of his mind; and he was able to have his thoughts "oftentimes as clear as he could almost desire," and to "take them off or fix them upon a subject in a manner as he pleased." "It was pleasant," he said, "to go quick in thought from notion to notion, without any images of words in the mind."

As we have glided into these personal details, it may be as well so far to complete them. More lived very much alone in the "paradise" which he had made for himself in Christ's College, save when the mistress of Ragley tempted him to join her society. "Many happy days, he said, he had spent in his chamber;" and so "sweet and pleasing was the fruit" of his solitary labours and musings, that they often appeared to him, "in looking back upon them, as an aromatick field." His father, who had, we have seen, at one time cherished other and ambitious hopes regarding him—"coming into his room, and seeing him there with his books about him, and full well knowing the tendencies of his studies, was most highly affected with it, and in a rapture said—what indeed was the truth—that he thought he spent his time in an *angelical* way."[1] He had no doubt of the propriety of the mode of life he had chosen for himself. He knew his own powers, and appreciated what he could do as well as what was agreeable to him. There were some of the "spiritualists," he said, "who would have had him to go upon a stall, and from thence preach to the people; but I have measured myself," he added,

[1] Ward, p. 60.

"from the height to the depth, and know what I can do and what I ought to do—and I do it." "If he was to live his whole life over again, he would do just, for the main, as he had done."

Living in college, he frequented, for the most part, "the public hall, except on Fridays, which being a fish-day, and that a sort of food which did not then so well agree with him, he chose rather to dine upon something else in his chamber. He kept more than once the time of Lent, abstaining from flesh; but he found, he said, that it quite altered the tone of his body, and so afterwards forbore the observing of it. His drink was, for the most part, the college small beer, which, in his pleasant way of speaking, he would say sometimes was seraphical, and the best liquor in the world. And he hath several times observed, according to the generous heat that was in him, how mightily he should find himself refreshed by it. But he was not at times without his farther refreshments of a better sort. And every one," adds his biographer, with more sense than many who have ventured to touch such details, "must here follow his own constitution and best experience in these matters."[1]

Such a life as More's necessarily presents few points of contact with the great events of his time. "He was so busy in his chamber with his pen and lines as not to mind much the bustles and affairs of the world without." He did not occupy any party position, even in that indefinite sense in which Whichcote and Cudworth may be said to have done. He had no relations with the statesmen of

[1] Ward, p. 94.

the civil war and the Commonwealth, and never made, like his friends, any prominent public appearance. Educated in a Calvinistic although not a Puritan home,[1] he turned aside very early from all that could have connected him with the religious parties dominant in his youth. His ideal was the Church of England as it existed before the times of disturbance—the Church of the Reformation and of Hooker. To Popery, in every form, he was as violently opposed as it was in his nature to be; and one of his chief works[2] is mainly devoted to an exposure of its antichristian features—the points in which it seems to him to favour idolatry, to bind burdens upon the conscience, and to deaden and resist, instead of quickening and educating, the divine life. All his rational impulses rose against such a system. But both his reason and his love of quietness and order were opposed to what he considered the excesses of Puritanism—"the dismal spectacle of an infinity of sects and schisms." We have already seen his relations with the Quakers. Not all his affectionate respect for Lady Conway could make him regard them with any leniency or favour, and he is here and there through his writings hardly fair to them, as when he describes them as the offspring of the Familists.[3] He probably dis-

[1] Decided Calvinist as his father was, he does not seem to have been a Puritan. More himself at least says, "His nearest relations were deep sufferers for the king."—Quoted by Ward, p. 186.

[2] "A Modest Enquiry into the Mystery of Iniquity: first part, containing a careful and partial delineation of the true idea of Antichristianism. 1564.

[3] Divine Dialogues, p. 459-567. These so-called Familists

liked the many forms of obtrusive fanaticism which prevailed in England in the seventeenth century, all the more because there was a side of his nature on which he felt he had some affinity with them. In all that he says of the Quakers, and throughout his interesting 'Treatise on Enthusiasm,' it is not difficult to trace the operation of this feeling. But his intense hatred of disorder was sufficient to keep in check all his own natural tendencies towards enthusiasm. Ardent as his religious feelings were, he cherished a strong dislike to that individualism and assertion of special divine prerogative which more or less lie at the basis of all fanaticism.[1] "Your enormous contumacity and schismaticalness," he said to the sectaries, "is hugely for the interest of Antichrist, and as manifestly against the interests of the Kingdom of Christ."[2] Both in his poems and

were the special bugbear of reasonable religious people amidst the swarming sects of the century. More describes them and their principles at length in his 'Grand Mystery of Godliness,' B. VI., chap. xii.-xviii.; and connects them directly with H. Nicholas, a fanatic of Amsterdam. They seem to have resembled the modern Communities of Love.

[1] Dial. V. 37.

[2] Apology, chap. x. 1664.—In this same Apology he presses the Sectaries with the following rather happy expostulation:—"Ye that fancy yourselves the only zealots for truth and holiness, the only sound and incontaminate part of our nation—but the National Church sick and crazy;—if it were so, indeed, where is your charity, and how little your discretion—to run out of the house now your mother lies thus on her sick-bed? Is it to call the physician? No. I demand then why do you run out of the house? O my mother is sick, and I am in good health. Will not any one reply, More unmannerly and unnatural son you! to leave your mother (when you ought most to assist and administer help unto her), and thus to strut out of doors merely to ostentate your own health, as if your glory was the greater that your mother is sick, while you fancy yourself so well?"

elsewhere he inveighs against the empty Opinionativeness so rampant, and the source of so many evils :—

> "'Tis opinion
> That makes the riv'n heavens with tempests ring,
> And thund'ring engine murderous balls outsling,
> And send men's groaning ghosts to lower shade
> Of horrid hell : *This* the wide world doth bring
> To devastation, makes mankind to fade—
> Such direful things doth false religion persuade.
>
> But true religion, sprung from God above,
> Is like her fountain, full of charity,
> Embracing all things with a tender love ;
> Full of good-will and meek expectancy ;
> Full of true justice and sure verity,
> In heart and voice free, large, even infinite ;
> Not wedged in strait particularity,
> But grasping all in her vast active spright :
> Bright lamp of God ! that men would joy in thy pure light."[1]

For himself, he loved nothing more, and desired nothing better, than the Church of England with its "decent grandeur and splendour." He "cannot but think that it would be a sorry exchange to accept of presbytery instead, which would prove but a *democratical Papacy*."[2] Yet he elsewhere[3] admits that Episcopacy may be prized unduly, and that the popular element may not be without its value and advantage. His main concern is, that neither one order of Church government nor another usurp the place which only religion itself should hold. He is for the "naked truth of Christianity," and nothing

[1] Immort. of the Soul, B. II. Cant. iii. 5, 6.

[2] Pref. to Expos. on Daniel, 58.

[3] Apol., c. v.

more; willing even to be called a Puritan, "if *this be* to be a Puritan." "I am," he concludes, "above all sects whatsoever as sects; for I am a true and free Christian; and what I write and speak is for the interest of Christ, and in behalf of the Life of the Lamb."[1]

If More's life as a student kept him retired from the world, it greatly stimulated his productivity as an author. Probably, also, it contributed in some degree to the endless prolixity and repetitions of his writings. We feel especially with him—as more or less with all the Cambridge school, except Whichcote—that we are conversing with a mind too little braced by active discipline, and the prompt, systematic, compact habits which come from large intercourse with men, and the affairs which stir men to powerful movement or great ambitions. The air of a school, which was after all confined to a narrow if influential sphere, is more pervading in his writings than in any of the others. Christ College, with its books, is never far out of sight; and all the sweetness and seclusion of Ragley, "the solemness of the place, its shady walks and hills and woods, where he lost sight of the world and the world of him,"[2] did not help to let the light of day or the breath of the common air into his "choice theories," however they may have assisted him in "finding them out" and elaborating them. In this respect we have been reminded more than once of an analogy betwixt him and the leaders of the modern High-Church school in its original development. Oxford

[1] Pref. to Reply to Eugenius Philalethes, sect. 11—quoted by Ward, p. 188, 189.

[2] Ep. Ded. to Imm. of Soul.

and Hursely Parsonage may not inaptly be compared to Cambridge and Ragley; and the enervating force of a wilful seclusion from the world is certainly not less conspicuous in Keble and Newman—although in a different direction—than in our author. It may be pleasant to keep away from the "bustles and affairs of the world without," as it is pleasant to contemplate the peculiar beauty and serenity of character which ripen amidst such retirements; but, after all, no man can escape from his fellow-men, and the rough facts of ordinary human life, without spiritual and intellectual injury. The product may be finer that is grown in solitude, but it will neither be so useful, nor, in many respects, so true and good.

And so More's writings, largely as they bulk in his life, and deeply interesting as some of them are to the religious and philosophical student, have long ceased to exert any influence. They never became literature. None of them have even attained the sort of dignified prominence accorded to Cudworth's 'Intellectual System,' which is eminently one of those books which people agree in highly respecting, without thinking of reading. As to their reception in his own age, there are two accounts not very easy to reconcile. On the one hand it is stated,[1] that an eminent London bookseller declared that, "for twenty years after the return of Charles II., the 'Mystery of Godliness,' and Dr More's other works, ruled all the booksellers in London." On the other hand, his biographer[2]

[1] Chalmers's Biog. Dict. The authority is not given.
[2] Ward, p. 73-75.

says virtually, on his own authority, "that, though he had not wanted particular and extraordinary respects from many persons, yet the world in general had either been in part averse to his writings, or not known well what to make of some things in them." "'Tis very certain," he adds, "that his writings are not generally (I will not say, read, but) so much as *known;* and many scholars themselves are in a great measure strangers to them." The truth seems to be, that some of his writings at least were very well received, and, judging from the number of editions which they reached, may be said to have been popular; but that he himself was disappointed with the welcome accorded to his favourite notions, or "theories," as he called them. These children of his brain were naturally much prized by him, and he wondered (as so many theorists have done before and since) that others did not value them as much as himself. To his own mind, they appeared "so very clear, as well as glorious, that he almost fancied he should have carried all before him; but a little experience served to cure him of this vanity, and he quickly perceived that he was not like to be over-popular."[1]

The period of his activity as an author stretched from the first publication of his poems, in 1642, to within ten years of the close of his life, in 1687—or a period of thirty-five years. During all this time he continued to write sometimes what we would now call pamphlets rather than books, but also many elaborate and formal treatises. He has himself left

[1] Ward, p. 72.

us a list of his publications in their chronological order, and we give a summary of it below,[1] which may interest the reader. Some of the most charac-

[1] The following is a summary of More's statement of the order in which he composed his works. We have abbreviated or thrown out the personal details which he intersperses with his statement, save in so far as they give some real explanation of the character of the works, or the circumstances of their origin. We have also added such explanations of our own as may give the reader some idea of writings which he has not himself characterised.

1. 1642-47. — Philosophical Poems.

2. 1650-51.—Letter and Reply to Eugenius Philalethes under the Pseudonym of Alazonomastix. We have not seen this letter nor reply, except as quoted by Ward in his "Life." He himself describes them as follows: — "Opuscula sane ludicro-seria et quæ nunquam scripsissem nisi næniis nugisque eorum temporum enthusiasticis dicam an phantasticis eo provocatus."

3. 1652.—Antidote against Atheism. New edition, 1655; also in Collection of Phil. writings, 1662.

4. 1653.—Conjectura Cabbalistica, or Attempt to interpret the Three first Chapters of Genesis in a threefold manner—literal, philosophical, and mystical, or divinely moral. Also in Collection, &c., 1662.

5. 1656.—Enthusiasmus Triumphatus; or a brief discourse of the nature, causes, kinds, and cure of enthusiasm; also in Collection, &c., 1662.

6. 1659.—Immortality of the Soul—with a valuable preface on the general subject of his philosophy; also 1662.

7. 1660.—An Explanation of the Grand Mystery of Godliness — written after an illness in which he had vowed, if spared, to write a book demonstrative of the truth of the Christian Religion—so far as concerns the person and offices of Christ — to the confusion of fanatics and infidels alike.

8. 1662.—Collection of Philosophical Writings, embracing Nos. 3, 4, 5, and 6, with an Appendix to No. 3; Latin correspondence with Descartes, and letter to V. C.

9. 1664.—Enquiry into the Mystery of Iniquity: first part chiefly directed against Popery; second part treating of the Prophecies of Scripture regarding the reign of Antichrist.

10. 1666.—Enchiridium Ethicum, or Manual of Ethics—the occasion of writing which is explained in our notice of Cudworth. New ed. 1669.

11. 1668.—Divine Dialogues; containing Disquisitions concerning the Attributes and Providence of God.

12. 1669.—Expositio Prophetica septem Epistolarum ad septem Ecclesias Asiaticas una cum An-

teristic of his works seem to have been the most popular; and amongst these may be mentioned the 'Antidote against Atheism,' his first prose publication, in 1652, and the essay on the 'Immortality of the Soul,' along with his two extended treatises, the 'Grand Mystery of Godliness' and the 'Mystery of Iniquity;' the former of which was published in the year of the Restoration, and the latter four years later. But of all his writings, the only one which can be said to have retained any literary popularity, or to be commendable to the modern reader, is his 'Divine Dialogues,' from which we have already given an extract of some length, illustrative of his mental and

tidoto adversus Idolatriam. (Prophetical Explanation of the Seven Epistles to the Seven Churches of Asia, along with Antidote against Idolatry, especially directed against certain doctrines of the Council of Trent.)

13. 1670.—Philosophiæ Teutonicæ Censura (Criticism of the Philosophy of Jacob Böhme).

14. 1671.—Enchiridium Metaphysicum—partly translated apparently by himself, along with a letter ("Answer to a learned Psychopyrist") on the *Nature of Spirit* in Glanvill's Sadducismus Triumphatus.

15. 1672-78.—More employed himself in issuing complete editions of his works in Latin: first, his 'Opera Theologica,' in 1675; and subsequently, in 1678, his 'Opera Philosophica.' The 'Opera Theologica' contain Nos. 7, 9, 12, along with some smaller pieces and hymns in Latin. The latter form two volumes folio. Volume I. contains Nos. 10, 14, 11, along with various minor philosophical writings, the productions of his later years; partly essays on what may be called Natural Philosophy—for example, the gravity and weight of fluid bodies in connection with the experiments of Torricelli; and partly a series of Cabbalistical writings, such as a mystical explanation of the vision of Ezekiel, a Cabbalistic Catechism, &c.; also a further letter to V. C., and a refutation of Spinoza (Duarum præcipuarum Atheismi Spinoziana columnarum subversio). Volume II. contains the Collection of the Philosophical writings published in English in 1662. This Latin republication of his writings was aided by a legacy from an admiring disciple, John Cockshuit of the Inner Temple, who left £300 for the purpose.

spiritual growth. It is of this volume that Dr Blair speaks in his Lectures on Rhetoric,[1] as "one of the most remarkable in the English language." "Though the style," he adds, "be now in some measure obsolete, and the speakers be marked with the academic stiffness of those times, yet the dialogue is animated by a variety of character and a sprightliness of conversation beyond what are commonly met with in writings of this kind." The 'Divine Dialogues' are certainly, upon the whole, the most interesting and readable of all More's works. The current of thought runs along smoothly, with less tendency than in any of his other writings to digressive absurdity and wearisomc subdivisions; the style is here and there fresh and powerful; and there is not only some liveliness of movement in the successive conversations, but an attempt is made, as Blair implies, to impart a definite portraiture to the several speakers, and to preserve throughout their individuality and consistency. This attempt is not very successful, but it is one in which scarcely any modern writer of dialogues has succeeded,[2] and More may in this respect compare happily even with Berkeley, in an age of far more literary brilliancy. The 'Divine Dialogues,' moreover, possess for the common reader the advantage of condensing his general views in philosophy and religion. In fact, most of his characteristic principles may be gathered from them.

The year 1668, in which he composed the 'Dialogues,' may be said to mark the apex of More's in-

[1] Lecture xxxvi.

[2] Except, perhaps, Mr Savage Landor, in some of his 'Imaginary Conversations.

tellectual activity. It is true that after this he composed his 'Manual of Metaphysics,' and attacked both Jacob Böhme and Spinoza in elaborate treatises. But the elasticity and temper of his philosophical genius are less buoyant in these efforts. His 'Metaphysics,' elaborate though they be, are in the main only a systematic and somewhat desultory expansion of views regarding the nature and proof of incorporeal substances, which he had already more than once expressed; while his cabbalistical and prophetical studies have acquired a stronger hold of his mind. Within the next ten years there are no fewer than five publications taken up with mystical subjects—some of them of the most curious technical character—including a 'Cabbalistic Catechism.' Two of these writings are addressed to a friend, Knorr, a learned German orientalist, whose speculations at this time considerably influenced him. Knorr had travelled a great deal, and zealously devoted himself in his peregrinations to chemistry and the Cabbalistic art. He was a friend of Van Helmont, with whom he conducted a correspondence which appears to have engaged the attention of our author.[1] He was evidently a man of remarkable, if somewhat useless, erudition, from the interest which he excited in Lightfoot and others.[2] He had read and admired More's works; and his admiration seems to have exercised

[1] Tome i. 423.

[2] His reputation was chiefly founded on a work entitled 'Kabbala Denudata, seu Doctrina Hebræorum transcendentalis, et metaphysica, atque theologica,' &c. 3 vols. 4to. "A farrago," it is said, "of wild reveries and mystical absurdities, with occasionally some learned notices of the philosophy of the Hebrews."—Chalm. Biog. Dict.

an injurious influence on a mind only too much inclined naturally to transcendental vagaries and mystical dreams.[1] The theosophic elements already so apparent in his philosophical poems, were for some time held in check by his higher life of reason and healthy appreciation of natural and moral facts. But gradually they acquired a more marked ascendancy, as his mental habits became fixed, and the elasticity of natural feeling and thought began to decay. The balance which had been long trembling began at length to decline on the unhealthy side. Prophetical studies, which have been the bane of so many minds of his stamp, became more and more attractive to him. 'Ezekiel's Dream,' and the 'Synchronous Method of the Apocalyptic Visions,' received elaborate transcendental explanation. He was himself conscious, apparently, of an undue confidence in this sort of study. Yet he was unable to resist its fascinations.[2] Such confidence, it may be safely said, is never found united with a sober and healthy rational discernment. A mind addicted to prophetical interpretation is almost always a mind either weak in itself, or becoming weakened in the intoxication of its own delusions.

[1] See his series of Cabbalistic writings, Opera Omnia, tom. i. 423-528; especially his Cabbalistic Catechism and Fundamenta Philosophiæ sive Cabbalæ-aeto-pædo-Melissæae, in which he discusses an extraordinary dream which he had of an eagle, a boy, and a bee, which appeared to him in their transformations to represent a form of Jewish Cabbala.

[2] In allusion it is supposed to himself, he makes one of the speakers in his fifth Dialogue say:—"The greatest fanaticism I know in him is this: that he professeth he understands clearly the truth of several prophecies of the mainest concernment, which yet many others pretend to be very obscure."

Of the last ten years of More's life we have no record. His health does not seem to have been good, for we find him writing in the end of 1680, "I have not been in bodily health—this is the best day I have had a great while."[1] Yet he does not appear even then to have laid aside his pen. On the contrary, says his biographer, "he wrote to the very last; and had then under his hands *Medela Mundi*, or a practical treatise which he call'd in that title, *The cure of the World*."[2] There is no further trace of this treatise, but it was probably the same which he mentions in one of his letters under the name of 'The Safe Guide.' It is pleasant to reflect that his active mind remained full of thoughts for others to the last, and that those great questions in which he said[3] he had spent all his time—What is good, and what is true?—were apparently as fresh and important with him at the end as at the beginning. He died on the morning of the 1st of September 1687, and was interred in the chapel of his college, where his friend Cudworth was to be laid beside him within less than a year.

More was in person tall and thin, but of a "serene and vivacious countenance—rather pale than florid in his later years—yet was it clear and spirituous; and his eye hazel, and vivid as an eagle." There is indeed, as all who have seen his portrait by Loggan[4] will admit, a singularly vivid elevation in his countenance—with some lines strongly drawn round the mouth, but with ineffable sweetness, light, and dignity

[1] Ward, p. 356.
[2] Ibid., p. 212.
[3] Ibid., p. 222.
[4] Prefixed to the Latin edition of his works.

in the general expression. As he is the most poetic and transcendental, so he is upon the whole the most spiritual-looking of all the Cambridge divines.

His character has been already so far sketched; but it is in some respects so marked and interesting a type of the devout mystic—a character which, as the world grows older, seems to become rarer, at least in any healthy form—that we may be excused for adding a few further touches. He was from youth to age evidently gifted with the most happy and buoyant religious temper. "He was profoundly pious; and yet without all sourness, superstition, or melancholy." His habitual cast of mind was a serene thoughtfulness, while his "outward conversation" with his friends was for the most part "free and facetious."[1] Religion was in practice with him clearly what he conceived it to be in theory,—the consecration and perfection of the natural life—the brightest and best form which it could reach, under the inspiration and guidance of the Divine Spirit. Although he chose for himself a secluded life, and so far suffered in consequence from a lack of that comprehensive experience which is more than all other education to the wise and open mind, he was not yet actuated in doing so by any indifference to the lighter and more active interests of humanity. "There was such a life and spirit in him as loved the exercises of reason, wit, and divine speculation at once."[2] And his biographer has heard him say "that he could not get melancholy enough," by which he was supposed to mean, "dive

[1] Ward, p. 119. [2] Ibid., p. 120.

deep enough into divine sense and meditation."[1] His spiritual happiness seems at times to have overpowered him, and given him cause for self-reflection. He professed to a friend that he was "sometimes almost mad with pleasure;" and he experienced this ecstatic feeling in the simplest circumstances. "Walking abroad after his studies, his sallies towards Nature would be often inexpressibly ravishing, beyond what he could convey to others."[2]

Many passages in his writings, and particularly in his 'Dialogues,' show how great was his love of and delight in Nature. He was wont to say that he wished that he could be "always *sub dio:*" "he could study abroad with less weariness by far to himself than within doors."[3] His freedom and buoyancy of mind, and rapturous delight in his own thoughts, would sometimes carry him away. It stimulated unduly his rapidity as a writer, and left him without the cool judgment that rigorously revises, condenses, and brings into form the heated thoughts which the brain casts from it in moments of spiritual and intellectual excitement. He said that he felt sometimes in writing as if his mind "went faster than he almost desired," and that "all the while he seemed, as it were, to be in the air."[4]

This mystical glow and elevation were the chief features of his mind and character; a certain transport and radiancy of thought which carried him beyond the common life, without raising him to any false or artificial height. It was remarked that his

[1] Ibid., p. 121.
[2] Ibid., p. 54.
[3] Ibid., p. 145.
[4] Ibid., p. 145, 146.

very air had in it something *angelical.* "He seemed to be full of *introversions* of light, joy, benignity, and devotion at once—as if his face had been overcast with a golden shower of love and purity."[1] Strangers even noticed this "marvellous lustre and irradiation" in his eyes and countenance.[2] "A divine gale," as he himself said, breathed throughout all his life as well as his works ; but however far it lifted him, it never inflated him. "A highly learned and pious man"[3] said "that he looked upon Dr More as the holiest person upon the face of the earth." But his charity and humility were not less conspicuous than his piety. "His very chamber-door was a hospital to the needy."[4] "When the winds were ruffling about him, he made it his utmost endeavour to keep low and humble, that he might not be driven from that anchor."[5] While More, in short, was no hero, either in thought or in deed,—his speculations were too transcendental and his life too retired for this,—he yet comes before us as a singularly beautiful, benign, and noble character—one of those higher spirits who help us to feel the divine presence on earth, and to believe in its reality.

II. In now turning to estimate More as a Christian thinker, we must, first of all, consider him in relation to the school of which he is a prominent representative, and the forms of contemporary thought which influenced him ; and then endeavour to sum up and explain some of the more distinctive

[1] Ibid., p. 105.
[2] Ibid.
[3] Dr Outram : Ward, p. 78.
[4] Ibid., p. 85.
[5] Ibid., p. 89.

principles of his peculiar philosophy. In other words, we shall look *first* at his general method and position; and *secondly*, at his special ideas and theories, so far as they retain interest or significance. In doing this, we shall refer to his writings indiscriminately, as may suit our purpose. More, still more than Cudworth, repeats himself, adding prefaces and appendices to what he has already written, and returning again and again upon the same track of thought. The germ, in fact, of most of his speculations may be traced in his early 'Philosophical Poems.' His genius, in one sense, was singularly fecund. Work after work sprang with easy luxuriance from his pen. But his writings do not exhibit any clear growth or system of ideas, unfolding themselves gradually, and maturing to a more comprehensive rationality. This lack of method is more or less characteristic of the school; but the multifarious character of More's writings renders it more conspicuous in him than in the others. Not only so. In his later productions there is rather a decay than an increase and enrichment of the rational element. To enter into any exposition of his Cabalistical studies — of his discovery of Cartesianism in the first chapters of Genesis, and his favourite notion of all true philosophy descending from Moses through Pythagoras and Plato; and still more to touch his prophetical reveries,—the divine science which he finds in the dream of Ezekiel or the visions of the Apocalypse—would be labour thrown away, unless to illustrate the weakness of human genius, or the singular

absurdities which beset the progress of knowledge, even in its most favourable stages. The supposition that all higher wisdom and speculation were derived originally from Moses and the Hebrew Scriptures, and that it was confirmatory both of the truth of Scripture and the results of philosophy to make out this traditionary connection, was widely prevalent in the seventeenth century. It was warmly supported and elaborately argued by some of its most acute and learned intellects.[1] Both Cudworth and More profoundly believed in this connection.[2] But

[1] Gale's once famous book, 'The Court of the Gentiles,' was written in support of this theory (1669-1677), and was widely popular both in England and on the Continent.

[2] The supposed traditionary connection was chiefly based on a passage in Strabo, Lib. xvi. 24 (to which reference has been already made), to the effect that a certain Sidonian or Phœnician of the name of Moschus, who lived before the Trojan war, was the reputed father of the Atomic Philosophy:—Εἰ δὲ δεῖ Ποσειδωνίῳ πιστεῦσαι, καὶ τὸ περὶ τῶν ἀτόμων δόγμα παλαιόν ἐστιν ἀνδρὸς Σιδωνίου Μώσχου πρὸ τῶν Τρωϊκῶν χρόνων γεγονότος. This Moschus or Mochus (for so he is elsewhere called in various passages, see Cud. *in loco*) was believed to be no other than the celebrated Moses of the Jews, with whose successors, the Jewish philosophers, priests, and prophets, Pythagoras conversed at Sidon. Such is Cudworth's conjecture (Intell. Syst. I. x.); and Selden and others, no less distinguished in learning, seemed to have joined in it. More puts the connection more distinctly and curiously as follows:—"The Cartesian philosophy being in a manner the same with that of Democritus, and that of Democritus the same with the physiological part of Pythagoras's philosophy, and Pythagoras's philosophy the same with the Sidonian, as also the Sidonian with the Mosaical; it will necessarily follow that the Mosaical philosophy, in the physiological part thereof, is the same with the Cartesian."—Appendix to the Defence of the Philosophick Cabbala, C. I.

Culverwell, it will be seen, distinctly repudiates this supposed indebtedness of the Greeks to the Hebrews; in this respect, as in some others, showing his superiority to his age and school.

this was only one of many instances of their lack of critical and historical judgment. Historical criticism, in the modern sense, was not even then dreamed of; and it is needless to consider forgotten delusions which have perished, rather with the common growth of reason than by the force of any special genius or discovery.

(1.) In his general method and the avowed basis of his thought, More occupies the common ground of the Cambridge school. He was a vigorous advocate of the rights of reason, and believed it to be one of his chief missions to show how the "Christian and Philosophic genius" should "mix together."[1] "The Christian religion, rightly understood," appeared to him to be "the deepest and choicest piece of philosophy that is."[2] It was "the main, if not the only scope" of his long and anxious studies, to demonstrate the rationality of the Christian religion throughout. "For to heap up a deal of reading and notions and experiments without some such noble and important design, had but been to make his mind or memory a shop of small wares."[3] He adopted therefore without hesitation the "generous resolution of Marcus Cicero, *Rationem quò ea me cunque ducet, sequar.*" He was proud to adorn himself as a writer with "the sacerdotal breastplate of the Λόγιον or *Rationale.*" "Every priest," he adds, quoting Philo,[4] "should endeavour, according to his opportunity and capacity, to be as much as he can a *rational* man, or *Philosopher.*" Again, "to

[1] Ward, p. 30.
[2] Ibid., p. 223.
[3] Pref. to Antidote against Ath., IV.
[4] De Monarch.

take away *reason* under what fanatic pretence soever, is to disrobe the priest, and despoil him of his breastplate, and, which is worst of all, to rob Christianity of that special prerogative it has above all other religions in the world—namely, *that it dares appeal unto reason*, which as many as understand the true interest of our religion will not fail to stick closely to—the contrary betraying it to the unjust suspicion of falsehood, and equalising it to every vain imposture. For take away reason, and all religions are alike true; as the light being removed, all things are of one colour."[1]

More's doctrine of reason is eminently Alexandrine. He quotes Philo and Clemens and Plotinus alike in support of his general position—"that the image of God is the royal and divine Logos, but the image of this image is the human Intellect.[2] Or, as he elsewhere explains more fully: "For mine own part, reason seems to me to be so far from being any contemptible principle in man, that it must be acknowledged in some sort to be in God Himself. For what is the divine wisdom but that steady comprehension of the ideas of all things, with their mutual respects; one to another, congruities and incongruities, dependences and independences? which respects do necessarily arise from the natures of the *ideas* themselves; both which the divine intellect looks through at once, discerning thus the order and coherence of all things. And what is this but *Ratio stabilis*, a kind of steady and immovable reason, discovering the connection of all things at

[1] Pref. to Antidote, VI. [2] Ibid., V.

once? But that in us is *Ratio mobilis*, or reason in evolution, we being able to apprehend things only in a successive manner, one after another. But so many as we can comprehend at a time, while we plainly perceive and carefully view their ideas, we know how well they fit, or how much they disagree one with another, and so prove or disprove one thing by another, which is really a participation of that *divine reason* in God, and is a true and faithful principle in man, when it is perfected and polished by the Holy Spirit; but before, very earthly and obscure, especially in spiritual things. But now seeing the Logos, or steady comprehensive wisdom of God, in which all ideas and their respects are contained, is but *universal stable reason*, how can there be any pretence of being so highly inspired as to be blown above reason itself, unless men will fancy themselves wiser than God, or their understandings above the natures and reasons of things themselves?"[1] To exclude the use of reason in the search of divine truth was therefore, according to More, simply to destroy the light by which divine truth can alone be recognised. It was to act, as he himself says, like a company of men, who, travelling by night, "with links, torches, and lanterns," put out their borrowed light from misconceit of it in comparison with "the sweet and cheerful splendour of the day," and choose rather "to foot it in the dark and tumble into the next ditch," than to go happily forward with such light as they had.[2]

[1] Pref. to Conjectura Cabbalistica, II., III.

[2] Discourse of Enthusiasm, Sect. LIV.

But while More is thus strenuous in his advocacy of reason as the only guide of the philosophical theologian, and the only sure foundation of divine truth, he no less strongly advocates the recognition of a higher principle "more noble and inward than Reason itself, and without which Reason will falter, or, at least, reach but to mean and frivolous things."[1] To this principle he gives the name of "Divine Sagacity," and speaks of it as antecedent, or, in his own language, "antecedaneous," to Reason, but also and more correctly as "the first rise of successful Reason, especially in matters of great comprehension and moment." "All pretenders to philosophy," he adds, "will be ready to magnify Reason to the skies, to make it the light of heaven, and the very Oracle of God; but they do not consider that the Oracle of God is not to be heard but in His holy temple—that is to say, in a good and holy man, thoroughly sanctified in spirit, soul, and body. For there is a sanctity even of body and complexion, which the sensually-minded do not so much as dream of. Aaron's *Rationale*—his Λόγιον or Oracle of Reason—did it not include in it the Urim and Thummim, *purity* and *integrity* of the will and affections, as well as the light of the understanding? Was not that breast-plate square, not only in reference to the firmness of Ratiocination, as Philo intimates, but also to denote the evenness and uprightness of his spirit that will take upon him to pronounce great truths?" "For if this Divine Sagacity be wanting, by reason of the impurity of a man's spirit, he can

[1] Pref. to Gen. Collection of Philos. Writings, p. 6.

neither hit upon a right scent of things himself, nor easily take it, or rightly pursue it, when he is put upon it by another."[1]

Here, again, our author not only quotes his Neo-Platonical authorities, but makes a great point of having Aristotle on his side, in a sentence which he quotes from the Eudemian Ethics,[2] to the effect that "the beginning of Reason in us is something higher than Reason or the Divine itself." He appears to mean substantially,—what is familiar to Platonic students, and may be said to have become a commonplace with certain theologians,—that in order to apprehend higher divine truth we must approach it with a right disposition, as well as a free and unprejudiced intellect. All such truth, from its very nature, addresses our reason on its moral as well as its intellectual side. Its reality can only be grasped through some share in us of the Divine, whence it comes, and which it represents. To affirm this seems little else than a truism, on the supposition that there is a spiritual truth at all, and that the divine ideal of the Gospels forms its highest expression. Yet, beyond question, so plain an axiom has been frequently forgotten, both in theology and philosophy; and More did right to emphasise it, as he does. It became the key-note of his whole system of thought. Without the recognition of such a spiritual side in Reason, he could not make a start at all. It is natural, therefore, to find him returning to the subject in the Preface to the Latin edition of his works, in which he reviews all that he

[1] Ibid. [2] Lib. vii., c. 14.

has done, and insisting upon it formally as the explanation of his having put his Ethics there in front of all his other philosophical writings. He did this, he says, with the view of marking for ever his opinion that the only solid foundation of a true philosophy of human life was moral purity—such a temper and quality of mind as he has described in his Ethics under the name of moral prudence, or philosophical temperance.[1] For any one to attempt the comprehension of divine things without a clear and purified spiritual insight, was like a man trying to grasp difficult objects at a distance, without a healthy and properly-assisted vision.[2]

With such a rational basis of thought, it may be matter of wonder that More developed so largely, not only an element of mysticism, but a vein of credulity, which must be pronounced excessive even for his age. It requires some acquaintance with his writings to estimate the force of this vein, and the strange manner in which it is constantly cropping out. He believed not only all the popular stories about witchcraft, but he recounts with an abounding faith the most absurd and frivolous narratives of ghosts and apparitions. Nay, he sets them forth

[1] "Hæc igitur aperta est ipsorum Tomorum ordinis ratio. Universis verò Scriptis Philosophicis *Enchiridium Ethicum* præfixi ut æternum sit nostræ sententiæ Monumentum, frustrà scilicet veræ Philosophiæ ac solidæ et in qua humani generis interest versari, operam impendi, nisi mores priùs corrigantur Animaque a vitiis omnibus expurgetur et purificetur. Impuro enim fas non est quod purum est attingere, quemadmodum monet Plato, nec unquam in Animo repullulat εὐαισθησία illa Pythagorica sine ea quam nos in Enchiridio nostro Ethico descripsimus Morali Prudentiâ et Temperantiâ Philosophicâ."—Pref. Generalissima, xiii.

[2] Enchirid. Ethic., lib. iii., cap. 9, sect. 6, 7, 8.

in a systematic manner, with perfectly honest aim, as attestations and arguments on behalf of the supernatural. The third book of his 'Antidote against Atheism' is entirely devoted to this subject, and is nearly as long as the two preceding books together—the first of which may be said to deal with the *a priori*, and the second with certain *a posteriori* aspects of the Theistic argument. It is scarcely possible, without consecutive perusal of this treatise, to conceive a mind so acute, searching, and logical, as is displayed in some parts of the first book, sinking into such puerility and nonsense as abound in the last. The metaphysician, hesitating with critical thoughtfulness over certain forms of the Cartesian demonstration of the existence of Deity, passes into a mere retailer of popular gossip, which has not even the merit of being interesting. We must bear in mind, however, the strong hold which such stories of the supernatural had upon the mind of the seventeenth century. Glanvill, the advocate of a scientific scepticism, ran in this respect a race of blind credulity with his friend.[1] We may also recall the phenomena of what is called spiritualism in our day, before condemning too loudly the absurdities of such men. Some of More's and Glanvill's stories are, in fact, singularly like those now or lately soliciting scientific investigation. "Spirit-thumping

[1] Hobbes was one of the few men of the age who professed entirely to disbelieve in ghosts, and to look upon them as "nothing else but creatures of the fancy" (Leviathan, c. 12, Part I.); but if the well-known story be true as to his apprehensions when left alone in the dark, his disbelief does not seem to have been of a very practical kind.

on the bench"[1] must have been very much the same as table-rapping. Nor does it seem more absurd to conceive spirits employed in the fantastic mischief-making attributed to them by our theologians, than in making senseless revelations without meaning or utility to any human creature.

In the general cast of his theological and ecclesiastical views, More was equally in accord with his school. His early alienation from Calvinism did not throw him into any opposite extreme of dogma. In his works he seldom alludes to Calvinism or Arminianism, and nowhere discusses or shows any interest in their doctrinal differences. His Platonic genius and the philosophic atmosphere around him saved him from this. All his theological interests go deeper. They concern not so much differences within the Church as the reality of Christian truth itself, and the existence of an organic Christian Communion or Church at all. His contentions were with "Atheists" or "Corporealists," on the one hand, and Quakers on the other—those who, in his view, either cut away the basis of the supernatural altogether, or destroyed the idea of a Church in the dream of a new or "second dispensation." The consciousness of this higher task made him, as well as his friend Cudworth, indifferent to minor distinctions of controversy. Indeed, he disliked such distinctions cordially, and frequently reprobates them under the name of "opinions," which, according to him, were merely "the goodly inventions of nice theologers," destined to disappear when men have learned a higher wisdom

[1] Antidote, B. III. c. 13.

and a more "corroborated faith in Christ."[1] With all the Cambridge divines, he emphasises the moral and practical side of Christianity. Religion was for him, as for all of them, embodied in life rather than in dogma; not that he disparaged right opinion or true doctrine, but that he desired, in a contentious age, to draw the earnestness of men from theological disputation to Christian duty. He could very well conceive a Christian man in honest error as to various points of doctrine; but religion without moral aspiration and action was wholly unintelligible. Nay, it was the wildest form of delusion, which could only end in fanaticism or imposture. His own proclaimed adherence to the principle of a *light within us* as the ultimate test of religious truth, presented either by nature or Scripture, made him insist all the more strongly on the application of a moral criterion to all religious profession.[2] It might be a fair question for any one perplexed amidst the swarming sects around him, as to which form of Christian doctrine was the true or divine form; but there could be no real question as to the vital principles lying at the foundation of all religion. To one thus perplexed he says:—"I demand of you, is there any way imaginable but this?—viz., to adhere to those things that are incontrovertibly good and true; and to bestow all that zeal, and all that heat, and all that pains, for the acquiring the simplicity of the life of God, that we do in promoting our own interest, or needless and doubtful opinions? And I think it is without controversy true to any that are not degenerate

[1] Mystery of Godl., Book X. c. 9. [2] Ibid., B. VII. c. 12.

below men, that temperance is better than intemperance, justice than injustice, humility than pride, love than hatred, and mercifulness than cruelty. It is also uncontrovertedly true, that God loves His own image; and that the propagation of it is the most true dispreading of His glory; as the light which is the image of the sun is the glory of the sun. Wherefore it is as plainly true, that God is as well willing as able to restore this image in men, that His glory may shine in the world. This, therefore, is the true faith, to believe that, by the power of God in Christ, we may reach to the participation of the divine nature; which is a simple, mild, benign light, that seeks nothing for itself as self; but doth tenderly and cordially endeavour the good of all, and rejoiceth in the good of all, and will assuredly meet them that keep close to what they plainly (in their own consciences) are convinced is the leading to it. And I say that *sober morality*, conscientiously kept to, is like the morning light reflected from the higher clouds, and a certain Prodrome of the Sun of Righteousness itself. But when he is risen above the horizon, the same virtues then stream immediately from his visible body; and they are the very members of Christ, according to the spirit. And he that is come hither, is a pillar in the temple of God, for ever and ever."[1] Again, when he looks forward to the future, he sees the triumph of Christianity—the dawn of a true Millennium—not in the elevation of this or that form of dogmatism, but only in the universal diffusion

[1] Ward, p. 52-54, quoted from Mastix's letter. See list of works, No. 2.

of a spirit of Christian purity, self-denial, and peace. "The childish conceit of some is, that the future prosperity of the Church will be nothing but the setting up of this form or that opinion; and so every faction will be content to be Millennists upon condition that Christ may reign after their way or mode; that is, in Calvinism, in Arminianism, in Papism, in Anabaptism, in Quakerism, in Presbytery, in Episcopacy, in Independency, and the like. But the true happiness of those days is not to be measured by formalities or opinions, but by a more corroborated faith in Christ and His promises; by devotion unfeigned, by purity of heart and innocency of life, by faithfulness, by common charity, by comfortable provisions for the poor, and abundance of kindness, and discreet condescensions one to another, by unspotted righteousness and an unshaken peace, by the removal of every unjust yoke, by mutual forbearance, and bearing up one another, as living stones of that Temple where there is not to be heard the noise of either axe or hammer, no squabble or clamour about forms or opinions, but a peaceable study and endeavour of provoking one another to love and good works."[1]

(2.) But More, like Cudworth also, had a determinate philosophic aim which carried him beyond the general teaching of the Cambridge school. He was not only in profession a rational theologian, and an advocate of conciliatory principles in religion and the Church; but he was still more characteristically a spiritual thinker, who sought to survey the whole

[1] Apology containing general account of his writings, with "particular application of several passages in his 'Mystery of Godliness,'" c. v. 1664.

field of knowledge in his day, and to bring its fresh, and in many respects startling, discoveries into some new form of theoretic synthesis or satisfactory philosophy. This was undoubtedly his own conception of his mission, as may be gathered from many hints in his writings; and its conscious dignity probably inspired and consoled him more in his solitary life of meditation than we might at first imagine.[1] The tone of one who had really worked for his age, and led it into a freer and nobler line of speculation, suited to its larger intellectual wants, may be traced throughout the elaborate preface to his collected works to which we have already so often adverted.[2] His own estimate of his labours has not been verified; some of his favourite speculations have even perished from the memory of the philosophical student; but the general force of his thinking was not only influential in its day, but has passed into the common inheritance of spiritual or theistic thought, as it stands once more in the course of revolution in the front of a materialistic philosophy. While there is much, therefore, in More's speculative attitude and theories which has merely a curious and antiquarian interest, there is also a good deal which is vital and perennially significant.

His general attitude as a thinker is to be determined with relation to the two great intellectual forces of the time—Hobbes and Descartes, especially the latter. There is no evidence, indeed, that our

[1] He speaks of himself in his Apology (see preceding note) as "a fisher for philosophers, desirous to draw them to, or retain them in, the Christian faith."

[2] Pref. Generalissima.

author was a student of Hobbes in any such sense as Cudworth, or that the speculations of the 'De Cive' or the 'Leviathan' had impressed him in the same manner. To Cudworth's more severe moral temper, Hobbes was an alarming phenomenon. He never speaks of him with any complimentary respect. He seems to have felt too closely, and, so to speak, too solemnly, the hostile bearing of his materialistic theories. But to More, from the more serene heights of his meditative enthusiasm, the author of the 'Leviathan' did not bulk with any such formidable significance. He was merely a hostile power among many other hostile powers; and when he alludes to him, which he does very seldom, he uses language more genial and respectful than he frequently applies to Quakers and other fanatical opponents. He is "our countryman, Mr Hobbes," whose speculative confidence "may well assure any man that duly considers the excellency of his natural wit and parts, that he has made choice of the most demonstrative arguments" in favour of his own conclusions.[1] Probably the very distance and elevation of More's mind from the peculiar principles that animated Hobbes, led him to look with comparative composure on the philosophy of the latter. He was too much above it or apart from it to understand it fully, or the attraction which it possessed for many minds. His own mode of thought was too diffusive, genial, and indistinct, to enable him to realise all the strength of a system so

[1] Immort. of Soul, c. ix. 2. He speaks of Hobbes again in the same treatise as "that confident exploder of immaterial substance out of the world," c. x.

simple, compact, and definite. Two minds more different it would be hard to conceive; the one full of eager enthusiasm and aspiring dreams of human philanthropy, fertile, earnest, and vaguely ingenious; the other sober, contemptuous, and severely thoughtful—with the most keen and shrewd insight into the difficulties of life and society, but without any faith or enthusiasm—content if only it could weave the conflicting threads of human interest and passion into a web of theory which would hold them together, and give them solidarity in their natural and constant tendency to repulsion and dissolution. It was easy for minds so entirely separate and so unlike to be mutually respectful. With so few common sympathies, and such divided aims, they could salute each other deferentially at a distance. For the story is, that Hobbes, reciprocating More's feeling, was in the habit of saying that if ever he found his own opinions untenable, "he would embrace the philosophy of Dr More."[1] It is pleasant to note such interchanges of personal compliment betwixt the opposing camps of thought; but they do not, of course—any more than the salutations of other combatants—pass for anything in the grave crisis of the struggle.

More's only direct polemic with Hobbes is to be found in his treatise on the 'Immortality of the Soul.' Here[2] he quotes at length the statements in the 'Leviathan'[3] and elsewhere,[4] about the nature and

[1] We have not ascertained the authority for this story, but it is commonly told in notices both of More and Hobbes. Whewell mentions it in his lectures.—Hist. of Moral Philosophy, p. 61.

[2] C. ix., x.

[3] C. 12, 34, 45, 46.

[4] Hum. Nature, xi., art. 4, 5, &c.

universality of Body, and attempts a detailed refutation of them. It is unnecessary in the mean time to enter into this polemic, because it joins on to our author's general views respecting the existence and nature of incorporeal substances, discussed at length in his Metaphysics and his correspondence with Descartes. It is enough to say that it strongly illustrates what we have already remarked as to the general relation of the two thinkers. Their primary position or starting-point is so diverse, that they cannot get together for fair argument and encounter. As Hobbes admits no other evidence than what he calls "conception;" and all conception, he adds, "is imagination, and proceedeth from sense;" [1] so of course he can find no rational or intelligent evidence for the existence of spirits—which he supposes to be those substances which work *not* upon the *sense*, and therefore are "not conceptible." To a philosophy which provides no inlet for any other form of truth and reality than that which is corporeal or sensible, it necessarily follows that there is nothing in the universe but *body*. "Body and Substance are but names of one and the same thing—which is called body, as it fills a place, and substance, as it is subject to various accidents or alterations." [2] But "it is plain to all the world," as More retorts, "that this is not to prove, but to suppose what is to be proved." [3] To shut the window may exclude the light, but does not prove that the light does not exist. On the other hand, the philosophy of More, opening from

[1] Hum. Nature, xi. 5.

[2] Substantially Hobbes's language, Lev., c. 34.

[3] Im. of Soul, I., x.

the commencement a higher inlet of fact—starting not from Sense, but from the spiritual Reason—not only has no difficulty in recognising spiritual or immaterial substance, but finds its highest evidence in this very region of truth which Hobbes deliberately shuts out of sight.

With Descartes, the connection of our author is far more intimate as well as definite. We do not trace its first beginnings, or the points by which he travelled from his favourite Neo-Platonic studies to the writings and system of the great modern thinker, the contemporary of his early manhood. But we have abundant evidence in his letters and elsewhere how heartily for a while he embraced Cartesianism. It would be too much to say that he ever did so entirely, for the letters themselves are occupied with the discussion of their points of difference. Even in the height of his first admiration, More mixed together, as he himself said, "some main points of Cartesianism and Platonism." [1] He was never a follower of Descartes, in the sense of having ceased to be a disciple of Plato. In other words, he never abandoned the Platonic or Neo-Platonic basis of his thought. But there was plainly a far more complete agreement betwixt them at first than afterwards. His statements in the correspondence and subsequently, apart from the general evidence furnished by the course of his writings, show this beyond doubt.

More's first letter to Descartes bears the date of December 1648. It is subscribed "cultor devotissimus;" and commences in the following exalted strain:

[1] Apology, c. 12.

"You alone can imagine the pleasure I have had in perusing your writings. I can assure you that I have felt not less exultation in apprehending and appreciating your admirable theories than yourself in discovering them, and that these fine productions of your genius are really as dear to me as if they had been the children of my own brain. In a sense, indeed, they appear to be my own—so entirely have my own thoughts run in the same channel in which your fertile mind has anticipated me. So much is this the case, that I cannot expect to meet anywhere with speculations more congenial to me, or more consonant with sound reason wherever it is to be found.—I speak freely what I feel. All the great leaders of philosophy who have ever existed, or who may exist, are mere pigmies in comparison with your transcendent genius; and no sooner had I made acquaintance with your works, than I formed the conjecture that your illustrious pupil, the Princess Elizabeth, had shown herself wiser, not only than all the rest of her sex, but even the philosophers, in Europe.[1] And the more thoroughly I became

[1] The Latin alone can do justice to the magniloquence of the encomium:—"Libere dicam quod sentio: omnes quotquot exstiterunt, aut etiamnum existunt, Arcanorum Naturæ Antistites, si ad magnificam tuam indolem comparentur, Pumilos planè videri ac Pygmæos: méque, cùm vel unicâ vice evolvissem Lucubrationes tuas Philosophicas, suspicatum esse, illustrissimam tuam discipulam, Serenissimam Principem Elizabetham, universis Europcæis, non fœminis solùm, sed viris, etiam Philosophis, longè evasisse sapientiorem. Quod mox evidentiùs deprehendi, cùm inceperim scripta tua paulò penitius rimari et intelligere. Tandem enim clarè mihi affulsit Cartesiana Lux (i. e.) libera, distincta, sibique constans Ratio, quæ Naturam pariter ac paginas tuas mirificè collustravit; ità ut aut paucissimæ supersint latebræ, et

acquainted with them, the more reason did I find to apprehend this. For at length the Cartesian Light shone upon me in all its fulness—a reason free, distinct, and self-consistent, marvellously illuminating nature and your pages alike,—so that there are but few hidden recesses which remain unexplored by it, or which at least, with a little trouble, may not be explored. All is so perfectly harmonious in your 'Principles of Philosophy' and other writings, and so conformable with itself and with nature, that the human mind could scarcely desire a more pleasant and agreeable spectacle. In your Method also there is a certain elegant and modest playfulness, which shows that nothing can be more amiable, lofty, and generous than your character as a man." Then, with a sentence or two in justification of his enthusiasm, which he is sure he shares only in common with his countrymen, he concludes:—"But there is no one who loves you more heartily than myself, or who *has embraced more thoroughly your excellent philosophy.*" The points as to which he differs, or feels hesitation, do not, he says, refer to fundamental principles, but would leave all the noble essence of Cartesianism untouched, or rather more coherent and satisfactory.[1]

He then enters with some detail upon those points of difference. They refer to Descartes's definition of matter, and the consequences arising from it,—

loci quos non patefecit nobilis illa fax, aut saltem vel levissimo negotio, mihi cum libitum fuerit, mox non vel patefactura," &c.—H. Mori Opera, tom. ii. 234.

[1] "Nihil ad essentiam Philosophiæ tuæ ac fundamenta pertinere, illáque sine istis optime posse constare."—Ibid.

such as the possibility of a vacuum and the divisibility of atoms,—and further, to his famous doctrine as to the motions of animals being merely mechanical. From this doctrine, which More characterises as "internecina illa et jugulatrix sententia," he expresses his strong dissent. Altogether, it may be inferred, even from this early correspondence, that, with all our author's enthusiasm for Descartes's genius and the general character of his philosophy, he differed more from him than he himself supposed. The simplicity and thoroughness of the great French thinker were at variance with his own more complex and traditional modes of thought. This was evident to Descartes, and betrays itself beneath all the courtesy of his replies and his expressions of astonishment at More not more fully understanding his meaning. He declines to argue about words, but explains clearly and at length what he intends by *extension*, and how much more radically and essentially it defines matter than such terms as *sensibility*, *tangibility*, and *impenetrability*, suggested by his correspondent. He shows, further, that in speaking of the movements of animals as only mechanical, he did not so much wish to disparage the lower animals as to discriminate and exalt man. In man there is, so far, the same sort of movement as in other animals—a movement automatic or self-regulating, yet purely mechanical, as depending upon external influences and the adaptation of the sensitive organs. The spring of this movement may be called an animal or corporeal soul (anima corporea). But in man there is, over

and above, a thinking soul, or *mens incorporeus* or *substantia cogitans.* He had pondered carefully as to whether there was any trace of this latter power in the lower animals, and could find no such trace. All their characteristic movements, on the contrary, appear to him explicable, and he engages to explain all by the conformity of their organs to the external world.[1]

They continue the general discussion as to the true nature and definition of *matter* and *spirit* through several letters; and in his last letter More diverges into mathematical and physical details. Through all he retains something of the same enthusiasm for Descartes personally, and the same lofty admiration for his philosophy, of which he subscribes himself in the end a faithful student and adherent.[2]

The same tone, or nearly so, is found in his reply seven years later, or in May 1655, to the request of Descartes's editor, Clerselier, to be allowed to publish More's letters amongst the Remains of the French philosopher, whose death followed shortly after More's last letter.[3] The first ardour of his Cartesian enthusiasm had evidently, by his own confession, begun to die away before this—very much, he says, from lack of new materials to feed upon. Yet he remembers his old enthusiasm with pleasure, and renews his raptures over the splendid attributes of Descartes's genius, and the admirable

[1] Responsum R. Cartesii ad Epist. Primum, H. Mori.—Ibid., p. 238-241.

[2] Philosophiæ tuæ Studiosissimus.

[3] Nov. 1649.

order and consistency of his theories. A thousand times read, they never failed to interest, any more than the light of the sun in its daily rising ceased to fill man, cattle, and birds with daily rejoicing.[1] Nor is the Cartesian philosophy only pleasant to read, but also, whatever some babblers may say, in the utmost degree useful for the highest end—the support of religion. "There is no philosophy, indeed, except perhaps the Platonic, which so firmly shuts the door against Atheism."[2] Still later, in his letter to V. C., first published in 1662, he defends Descartes at length from the vulgar charge of Atheism, and while not withdrawing any of the objections formerly urged against some of his principles, points out how far he had, by the application of mathematical and mechanical laws, elevated the study of physics, and liberated it from the "substantial forms" or "occult qualities" and other nonsense of the schoolmen. He does credit also to his great services in metaphysics, especially the clear distinction which he had drawn between soul and body, his vindication of innate ideas, and his demonstration of the existence of Deity from our idea of a necessary and perfect Being.

It is all the more wonderful that, within a few years, we find his tone entirely changed, and changed clearly in the view of what he had formerly said. The evidence of this is the curious address, under

[1] "Est enim illud rerum pondus, veritatis pulchritudo, amplitudo ingenii et acumen, Theorematum denique omnium admirabilis ille ordo et consensus in scriptis Cartesianis, ut vel millies lecta non sordescant: non magis quàm lux Solis, cujus ortum singulis diebus aves, pecudes, ipsique adeò homines gratulabundi contemplantur."—Responsum H. M. ad Epist. C. Clerselier. [2] Ibid.

the title of "The Publisher to the Reader," which he prefixed to the 'Divine Dialogues,' published in 1667. There can be no doubt that this address is from More's own pen, although somewhat disguised, with a view to preserve the anonymous character of the publication. After premising the subject of the Dialogues, and glancing contemptuously at the Cartesians under the name of Nullubists,[1] he proceeds to explain his opposition to "that so much admired philosopher, Renatus Des Cartes, on whom persons so well versed in philosophical speculations have bestowed so high encomiums, especially a writer of our own [himself], who, besides the many commendations he up and down in his writings adorns him with, compared him[2] to Bezaliel and Aholiab, as if he were inspired from above with a wit so curiously mechanical as to frame so consistent a contexture of mechanical philosophy as he did."[3] He questions whether, as the writer of the Dialogues, he does not risk his credit by venturing to impugn so great a name and authority. Yet the cause of truth and the glory of God force the task upon him, in which, besides, he is encouraged by the example of that very encomiast of Descartes's philosophy (himself again), who, in his letter to V. C., "when he makes it his business to apologise for Descartes, and extol and magnify him to the skies, yet does plainly and expressly declare, 'That it is a kind of vile and abject ὑλολατρεία, or superstitious idolising of matter, to pretend that all the phenomena

[1] See p. 399.

[2] In his Appendix to the 'Defence of his Philosophical Cabbala.'

[3] Dialogues, vii. Ed. 1713.

of the universe will arise out of it by mere mechanical motion.'" The author of this letter, with all his admiration of Descartes's mechanical genius, only acknowledged "some few effects" to be "purely mechanical;" and he is now convinced, after more serious consideration, "that there is no purely mechanical phenomenon in the whole universe."

He then endeavours to explain his scriptural compliment to Descartes as meaning nothing more than that "he had a great deal of wit and sagacity to find out the most credible material causes and their 'specious contexture,' so as to explain the existing system of things. But 'that these things can neither arise nor hold together without an higher principle,' he had always maintained, and plainly declared in several writings long before. He has now come to the conclusion that what is really good in the Cartesian philosophy is borrowed from the ancient Cabbala of Moses, and the 'traditions of Pythagoras and his followers'—'and no new inventions of the Cartesian wit.' 'The rest of the philosophy is rather *pretty* than *great*, and in that sense that he drives at, of pure mechanism, erroneously and ridiculously false.'"

This is a very different tone, indeed, from that of his early letters; and in his elaborate 'Manual of Metaphysics, or Enchiridium Metaphysicum,' published some few years later (1671), he speaks in still more disparaging terms of Descartes, whom he now identifies with the Materialists and Atheists. It is true that the French thinker has declared incorporeal substance to be the proper object of Meta-

physics, and vindicated a distinction betwixt soul and body; but, on the other hand, he has so conceived and defined both spirit and matter that they lose their essential distinction, and thus he leaves the triumph to the Materialist. What if God be represented as absolutely perfect, and His existence deduced from the idea of necessary and absolute perfection, if, at the same time, He is conceived as unextended, and therefore nowhere; and if matter, in its own proper idea, no less necessarily exists, and cannot be thought away from the universe of space! What is the use of a God that cannot act upon matter? or a Divine Providence whose *ends* are not to be inquired into?[1] And many other objections More insists upon at length, with an acerbity and exaggeration of statement no less remarkable than his previous raptures. His Cartesian enthusiasm has at length not only died down, but turned into sourness and bitterness of spirit. The express design of the 'Enchiridium Metaphysicum' is, in fact, as implied on the title-page, to refute Cartesianism, or, in his own language, to estimate its mechanical explanations of the universe, and expose their "vanity and falsehood."

This cursory statement of our author's relations to Descartes is interesting in itself, but chiefly for the light which it throws upon More's mental character and his real philosophical bias. Enamoured at first by the rational clearness and originality of the Cartesian speculations, he could not long maintain the higher attitude of pure reason to which they raised him. Strongly rational on one side of his nature against

[1] Opera H. Mori, tom. i., ad Lectorem Præf., p. 137.

the extremes of enthusiasm, and the prejudices of religious party spirit, he was yet continually lapsing on the other side into mystical extravagances. His reason was never a "dry light" like that of the French philosopher, which penetrated all disguises, and brought him face to face with the secrecies of nature. More loved—even in his highest exaltations of thought—the shadow of mystery; and the clear simplicities of the 'mechanical' philosophy appeared bald and false when he had time to reflect upon them. They hid from his view the presence of the divine life, and even of any lower 'spermatical' life in nature, and seemed to leave nothing but a congeries of self-acting phenomena. The truth is, that he was not only by education, but essential nature, a transcendentalist. In mixing up Cartesianism with his original Neo-Platonism, he never abandoned any of the distinctive ideas of the latter. A temporary enthusiasm for Descartes carried him away, and a generous spirit could not find words large enough to convey his admiration. But he was altogether of a different temper of mind. He never quite thoroughly entered into the meaning of the Cartesian philosophy, and in natural course his mind reverted to its original bias with something of the disappointment which comes from baffled enthusiasm, and the injustice with which all thinkers absorbed in a religious aim are apt to regard a rejected idol.

More's great aim, and the aim throughout of the Cambridge philosophy, was the vindication of a true sphere of spiritual being. That there is an incorporeal world, and incorporeal substances transcend-

ing and embracing the physical system of things, was the animating idea of all his chief writings, from his early poems to his 'Metaphysical Manual.' The Manual is devoted exclusively to the proof and definition of such substances. It is "de Existentia et Natura Rerum Incorporearum." This is with him the sole object of metaphysics. It is the science of spiritual being, and treats first of the fact of such being, and then of its nature and attributes. All that is further distinctive of our author's thought, and more than has any longer any living meaning, may be gathered up in a brief exposition of his views on this great subject, and of his attitude as a Moralist, in his 'Ethical Manual.'

Besides the 'Enchiridium Metaphysicum' there are two of his earlier and most elaborate writings —the 'Antidote against Atheism' and the treatise on the 'Immortality of the Soul'—which both specially deal with the question of the existence of spirit. The treatment is less formal and extended in the Antidote; but the essay on Immortality is scarcely less elaborate and technical than the Manual. His object is exactly the same in both, but his attitude is somewhat different. In the earlier work, Hobbes is his chief opponent; and in the later work, Descartes. We shall endeavour to collect his views in relation to both. His own thought is so imbedded in controversy that it can only be thus clearly understood. Our analysis will fall under the following heads: (*a*) the notion of spirit; (*b*) the fact or proof of the existence of spirit; and (*c*) its special nature or qualities. On all these points, and especially the

first, he comes into direct conflict with Hobbes and Descartes.

(*a*) The notion of spirit is one of his main points, to the exposition of which he repeatedly recurs. While Hobbes appears to him to deny altogether the notion as valid or natural,[1]—as indeed anything but a figment or "creature of the fancy,"—he contends that the notion is equally clear and distinct with that of body—"as intelligible and congruous to reason."[2] A spirit is to him a "substance penetrable and indiscerptible;"[3] that is to say, capable of penetration and incapable of distribution. The capacity of penetration implies "self-motion, self-contraction, and dilation," while indiscerptibility implies that spirit, of its own nature, invincibly holds itself together so that it cannot be disunited or dissevered.[4] His notion of body or matter is exactly the converse—"a substance impenetrable and discerptible."[5] The idea of matter is resistance, or the capacity of "keeping out stoutly and irresistibly another substance from entering into the same space or place with itself;"[6] and again, the capacity of endless subdivision and distribution into parts. There is nothing more "conceivable" to him in the one idea than the

[1] "The opinion that such spirits" (as men commonly fancy—ghosts, for example) "were incorporeal or immaterial could never enter into the mind of any man by nature, because though men put together words of contradictory signification as *spirit* and *incorporeal*, yet they can never have the imagination of anything answering to them."—Leviathan, c. xii. This, with many other passages, C. xxxiv., xlv., xlvi., are quoted at length by More.—Immortality of Soul, B. I. c. ix.

[2] Im. of Soul, B. I. c. iii.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Ibid., I. c. v.

[5] Ibid., I. c. iii.

[6] Ibid., I. c. v.

other ; or, in other words, more natural and rational. So far, therefore, he opposes Hobbes with assumption against assumption. For the latter to affirm that "everything in the universe is body, and that body and substance are one and the same thing, it being called body as it fills a place, and substance as it is the subject of several alterations and accidents,"[1] "is not to prove, but to suppose what is to be proved."[2] Such an affirmation professedly rests, and can only rest, on the presupposition that body is the only conceivable substance. But this is so far from being true that the notion of spirit is the more direct and immediate, and therefore natural, of the two. There is certainly "as much reason for the one as the other."[3] So far as our mere conception or notion is concerned, it is as easy or difficult for us to hold the one before our minds as the other. There is nothing more inconceivable in *indiscerptibility* than *resistance*—the absolute *holding together* implied in the one, than the absolute *holding out* implied in the other. And so far, therefore, there "can be no prejudice to the notion of spirit."[4]

With Descartes, of course, he can have no quarrel on the primary point of the validity of the notion of spirit. For the French thinker has put this point far more clearly and effectively than himself. He has vindicated the idea of spirit and thought as the primary datum of all knowledge—the original certitude out of which all other certitude and science comes. And it is highly singular, as we have already

[1] Leviathan, c. xxxiv.
[2] Im. of Soul, B. I. c. x.
[3] Ibid., I. c. iii.
[4] Ibid.

remarked, that neither More nor Cudworth does any justice to this fundamental aspect of the Cartesian philosophy, nor, so far as we remember, alludes to it. Passing by the service which Descartes could here have rendered against Hobbes, he forces a vigorous quarrel upon the former respecting the manner in which he has conceived or defined his notion of both spirit and matter—viz., as *thought* in the one case, and *extension* in the other. On the first point he does not dwell at much length; but the Cartesian definition of matter as extension may be said to be More's philosophical bugbear, which he is never tired of chasing—returning to it on all occasions, and assaulting it with renewed weapons of argument and abuse. It is the point, we have seen from his correspondence with Descartes, which he repudiates even in the first fervour of his admiration and enthusiasm. "You define," he then said, "matter or body in too general a manner as extension. For all existence, even God, must be conceived as extended, or *res extensa*."[1] "All substances are extended."[2] In his 'Metaphysical Manual' he returns to the subject and argues it at great length. To define matter by extension, appeared to More to invest it with eternal and immutable qualities. If we must conceive matter wherever we conceive extension, then we must admit matter everywhere, and admit it as necessarily subsisting, for we cannot think away the idea of extension. Its existence becomes necessary of itself, "because in its very notion or idea

[1] Epistola prima, H. Mori ad R. Cartesium.
[2] Im. of Soul, B. I. c. ii.

it cannot but be conceived to be—we being not able otherwise to conceive, but that there is an indefinite extension round about us."[1] In short, extension and space become interchangeable; and More, so far from regarding space as material, made it the primary basis of his elaborate proof in his Metaphysics for the existence of spirit. Space is with him the necessary ideal background of matter; but it is in no sense itself material or of the nature of body. For body is definite and movable. Space is indefinite and immovable. Body can only be conceived in relation to it, and we can readily think it away as non-existent. But space survives all our attempts to think it away. Is it then a mere abstraction? No. It has real attributes of unity, immensity, immobility, eternity; and these must have some reality answering to them. For an abstraction is a mere void or negation. What then is space? It is not only something real, but something divine. It represents to us, in a confused and general manner, the divine essence. It is a manifestation of God. "*Est confusior quædam et generalior representatio essentiæ, sive essentialis præsentiæ divinæ quatenus a vita atque operationibus præciditur.*"[2]

So far, therefore, from conceiving matter as extension, extension became to More a direct indication of a spiritual or divine Substance. To confound matter and extension with Descartes, appeared to him to end in materialism. But not only so. Such an idea of matter not only invested it with indestructible and necessary qualities; but, on the other

[1] Introd. to Divine Dialogues, x. [2] Enchir. Metaph., c. viii., xv.

side, it detracted from the essential character of Deity as everywhere present. For supposing God to be unextended, He is necessarily *nowhere.* The unextended thing is a thing not in space — is a thing nowhere and non-existent. Into such an abyss of Atheism, on the one side and the other, did the Cartesian definition seem to lead him. These ideas, at first vaguely entertained, evidently acquired a vivid hold of More's mind, and inspired the Anti-Cartesian furor of his later years, which he has vented in his 'Divine Dialogues' and Metaphysics. He has gone the length of characterising the Cartesians as Nullubists, and devoting a lengthened chapter to their refutation under this name.[1]

The Nullubists are those who affirm that a spirit is nullubi, or nowhere; and their chief author and leader is "that pleasant wit" Descartes, who in his "jocular metaphysical meditations" has so argued as to imply this extraordinary conclusion. For, says our author, the whole force of such conclusion is comprised in the axioms, first, that *whatsoever thinks is immaterial;* second, that *whatever is extended is material;* third, that whatever is unextended is nowhere. The last appears to him a "consectary," or

[1] Enchirid. Metaphys., c. xxvii. In addition to "Nullubists," or those who affirm that a spirit is *nullubi* or nowhere, he distinguishes those whom he calls "Holenmerians" (ὁλενμέρεια) as maintaining that spirit is not only somewhere, or present in a definite locality, but wholly present in every part or point of that locality. "This the Greeks would fitly call οὐσιαν ὁλενμερῆ, 'an essence that is all of it in each part,' and the propriety thereof, the Holenmerism (τὴν ὁλενμέρειαν) of incorporeal beings. Whence these other philosophers, the opposite of the former, may significantly and compendiously be called *Holenmerians.*"—Ibid. i.

corollary from the two first. On the contrary, he maintains that whatever *is*—spiritual or material substance—in virtue of its simple being, is *somewhere*, and therefore extended; and to the difficulty which ensues from this of conceiving a being at once spiritual, that is indivisible, indiscerptible, and yet extended or located in space, he replies as formerly by representing space as twofold—at once as material and spiritual, external and internal; or, in special phrase, as *extensive* and *intensive*. To this latter conception he has given the name of essential consistency (spissitudo essentialis), and it may be held as answering in some degree to the modern conception of force. This is indeed the one fruitful issue of More's speculations on this subject. In his reaction against the bare idea of thought as constituting spirit, and his difficulty of conceiving mere thought in relation to matter, he brought out the necessity of contemplating spirit, not merely as cogitation or intellection, but also as activity. The operation of spirit, and spirit itself—thought and thought-in-action—are essentially united, and cannot even be conceived apart. Thought *is* activity, and no mere abstract entity, and activity of course is somewhere. Spirit in its essence is not merely thought, but force—going forth for ever into the world of external being, and animating and illuminating it.

There was something, therefore, in More's criticism of the Cartesian notion of spirit. Under all the absurdity and irrelevance of many of his detailed arguments he probed its deficiency, and vaguely

indicated a higher unity of conception, in which life, united with thought, in indistinguishable union — now presenting the side of will and now the side of reason—constitute spirit. The Cartesian world of mere thought and extension appeared to him a bald and imperfect world, from which the living energy of the Divine was banished. He sought, therefore, to clothe both factors with a richer meaning; and while translating matter into something more than extension, he expanded this category so as to embrace mind, and only in the idea of thought operating or actively manifesting its presence found his complete notion of spirit.

(*b*) Turning from More's conception of spirit to his proof of spiritual existence, we enter upon a wide tract of speculative argument repeatedly traversed by him. Now, as in his 'Antidote against Atheism' and his Metaphysics, he treats the subject on the divine side, with reference to a supreme spiritual existence; and again, as in his essay on the 'Immortality of the Soul,' he discusses the special question as to whether there is a spirit in man distinct from his bodily organisation. The two aspects of the question are indissolubly united with him, as with Smith and Cudworth. But his discursive genius takes sometimes the one, and sometimes the other direction, without keeping clearly before him their cohesion or organic relation. He traverses frequently the same course of argument, and, especially in his Metaphysics, diverges into descriptions of physical phenomena, and their scientific explanation, with a copiousness which, while it repels

the modern reader, indicates a marvellous acquaintance with all the branches of science in his time. The singular fertility of More's genius shows itself in nothing more than in the facile fulness with which it ranges over almost every field of knowledge then open to the student.

One of his most elaborate arguments in favour of spiritual existence is that which we have already considered, drawn from the idea of extension and space. This idea remains an indestructible element of consciousness under every attempt to thrust it away. It implies therefore a reality, and a reality which in his view does not come under the essential categories of matter. It is neither sensible, impenetrable, nor discerptible. On the contrary, it is one, indivisible, infinite; and so it is the revelation or manifestation of an infinite divine Being, transcending matter, and unmoved by its conditions. He devotes the sixth, seventh, and eighth chapters of his 'Enchiridium Metaphysicum' to an elaboration of this argument.

Other forms of argument are as follows :—

It is an essential property of matter that it is contingent. But the very idea of contingency implies a higher principle of necessity — something which depends not upon another, but exists in and for itself. Further, that which is not contingent—which excludes one of the essential properties of matter—must be spiritual.[1] The same argument is turned in a different form in the essay on the 'Immortality of the Soul.'[2] The idea which we have of God is that of "an essence absolutely perfect." But such an

[1] Enchirid. Met., c. 9, 10. [2] B. I., c. vi.

essence "cannot possibly be body." It must be something incorporeal. And so the very idea of God contains a reason or proof of spiritual existence.

Again, the mere fact of motion or force implies something transcending matter. For the nature of matter is homogeneal. It is either at rest or in motion; but it has no specifical differences in itself, or no power of itself of passing from the one state to the other. In its own nature, it is without any principle of motion. It may conserve that originally imparted to it. The primary impress or force may not require constant renewal, any more than the matter itself requires to be constantly created anew.[1] But it has no power of origination. And such a power can only be conceived as springing from a spiritual self-subsisting cause. In other words, motion necessarily implies a mover outside of the thing, or material phenomenon moved. Spirit is therefore the necessary analogue of force.

Still more strongly does the order of material phenomena imply a mind or ordering spirit behind. If the simple fact of motion proves the necessity of a power distinct from matter, there is in More's own language "a further assurance of the truth from the consideration of the order and admirable effect of this motion in the world. Suppose matter could move itself, would mere matter with self-motion amount to that admirable wise contrivance of things which we see in the world? Can a blind impetus produce such effects with that accuracy and constancy, that the more wise a man is, the more he will be assured *that no wisdom can add, take away, or alter*

[1] Ibid.

anything in the works of nature, whereby they may be bettered? How can that, therefore, which has not so much as sense, rise to the effects of the highest pitch of reason or intellect?"[1] So he argues in the essay on the 'Immortality of the Soul,' and to the same effect at length in the second book of his 'Antidote against Atheism;' while in his Metaphysical Manual he passes under review all the most important phenomena of nature, the double rotation of the earth, the flux and reflux of the ocean, the arrangement and movement of the heavenly bodies, the composition and effects of light, the processes of organisation in plants and animals, and especially the operations of the human mind—all with a view of showing how impossible it is to account for them by mere mechanical laws. The argument is exactly of the same tenor with that which the modern Theist urges against the Darwinian or any other materialistic hypothesis. Given matter even "with the advantage of sense," or an obscure protoplastic power—the orderly development of the world of life, and, still further, of the world of thought, appears impracticable. "Assuredly, when all is summed up that can be imagined, it will fall short of the amount."[2] The motion of "universal matter" may be supposed "to grind itself into the more rude and general delineation of nature, but it fails wholly to account for the diversities of animal species."[3] These diversities are only explicable as the outcome, each of an underlying idea. And "how is it conceivable that any particle of matter, or many together—there not

[1] Ibid., c. xii. [2] Ibid. [3] Antidote against Atheism, B. II., c. i.

existing yet in nature any animal—can have the idea impressed of the creature they are to frame?"[1] How, in short, can the series of animal being, in all its beauty and variety, grow from the mere obscure shootings of an aboriginal plasticity? Still more, how can intelligence be flashed into being from the mere upward gropings of a power without consciousness, or even life? This seemed to More more impossible than that "so many men, blind and dumb from their nativity, should join their forces and wits together to build a castle or carve a statue of such a creature as none of them ever knew of."[2]

All these are arguments which more or less retain interest and meaning. The difficulties of a materialistic or merely mechanical hypothesis of the origin of life and thought are very much where they were. A wider induction of natural facts, and closer observation of the variations which arise through long periods in natural species, may have opened up possibilities of development unknown to the seventeenth century; but they have done nothing more. So far, therefore, the principles of our author's argumentation are not out of date. But he was not content in any of his writings, even in his Metaphysics, to appeal to argument alone on this great subject. He had always in reserve an appeal to spiritual phenomena or apparitions, of whose credibility neither he himself nor any of his contemporaries, with the exception of Hobbes, had any doubt. He deals chiefly with this sort of evidence in his Antidote; but it reappears in the essay on Immortality, as well as in the

[1] Imm. of Soul, B. I., c. xii. [2] Ibid.

Metaphysics, and was evidently a real source of his belief in spiritual facts. It seems rather to have gained than lost hold upon his mind as he advanced in years: for in the essay on Immortality he distinguishes "the pre-eminence of arguments drawn from reason above those from story;" while in his later correspondence with Glanvill he is enthusiastic in his defence of witches and ghosts as evidences of a spiritual world. Such evidences seem to have been specially vouchsafed for the confutation of "Hobbians, Spinozians, and the rest of that rabble," in order "that their dull souls, so inclinable to conceit, may be rubbed and awakened with a suspicion, at least, if not assurance, that there are other intelligent beings besides these that are clad in heavy earth and clay."[1] "Let the small philosophick Sir Foppling of this present age," he adds, deride them as much as they will; those who are at pains to collect "well-attested stories of witches and apparitions do real service to true religion and sound philosophy, and the most effectual and accommodate service to the confounding of infidelity and Atheism, even in the judgment of the Atheists themselves, who are as much afraid of the truth of these stories as an ape is of a whip." Something of the "sharpness and satiricalness" of this letter and postscript may be due to the confidence of correspondence with a sympathetic friend; but there is reason to think that it expresses the normal attitude of More's mind on this subject. So little had his philosophic and

[1] Letter to Glanvill, prefixed to 4th ed. of 'Sadducismus Triumphatus,' 1726. More's letter is dated 1678.

scientific studies given him any real or clear idea of the nature of evidence, or his own enlargement of Christian thought enabled him to understand the motives of those who differed with him beyond a certain point, or professed opinions more advanced than his own.

It is unnecessary to dwell upon the special arguments by which he aims to prove the existence of a soul in man, distinct from his body. They present nothing of novelty or particular interest. The facts of perception or an ideal element in knowledge, and of free-will, are his two main proofs of an immaterial principle. He argues both points at length,[1] chiefly against Hobbes, but keeping Descartes also in view, and particularly his well-known theory of the conarion or pineal gland being the seat of the thinking principle. This theory has to him a suspicion of materialism, notwithstanding Descartes's strong affirmation of a rational soul or independent spiritual faculty. He supposes it to imply that the business of knowledge may be actively transacted betwixt this central seat and the animal spirits and organs of the body as its ministers or messengers, and is at pains to prove from Descartes's own description that this cannot be without the intervention of a soul, which is no more than what the author of the theory himself distinctly maintains.[2] In the end he admits that there is much to be said for the Cartesian opinion,[3] but, upon the whole, for himself, inclines to place the seat of the soul in the fourth ventricle of the brain! as

[1] The Imm. of Soul, B. II., c. ii.-xi.

[2] Ibid., c. v.

[3] Ibid., c. vii.

being in most direct and happy communication with the *animal spirits*, "which are the soul's immediate organs for sense and motion." "If therefore there be any place where these spirits are in the fittest plenty and purity, and in the most convenient situation for animal functions, that in all reason must be concluded the chief seat and *acropolis* of the soul. Now the spirits in the middle ventricle of the brain are not so indifferently situated, for both the body and the head, as those in the *fourth* are—nor so pure." The two upper ventricles are also described as comparatively unfit for the function; so it is manifest that "the fittest situation of the spirits" being in the fourth ventricle, this must be considered as "the centre of perception, and the common sensorium of the soul"![1]

(*c*) But it was by no means enough for More to vindicate to his own satisfaction the existence of spiritual substance or of a soul in man. His philosophic imaginativeness pursued the subject far beyond the bounds of rational inference, or even rational conjecture. The nature of soul, whence it comes, and in what form it survives its departure from the body, are copiously and tediously discussed. The very obscurity of such questions has a charm for his quaint and dreamy thoughtfulness, which delighted in the fantasies of its own musing. He

[1] Professor Huxley, speaking of Descartes's hypothesis, observes:—"Modern physiologists do not ascribe so exalted a function to the little pineal gland, but in a vague sort of way they adopt Descartes's principle, and suppose that the soul is lodged in the cortical part of the brain—at least, this is commonly regarded as the seat and instrument of consciousness.—'Lay Sermons,' p. 370.

struck into this dim region in his early poems, and it never ceased to allure him.

One of these poems, for example, is on "The Pre-existency of the Soul;" and in his essay on Immortality he recurs to this hypothesis as "more agreeable to reason than any other hypothesis whatever." It is necessary for him to have some theory of the production of the soul. It must come *ex traduce*, or be created on occasion, or emerge from a previous state of being; and of all these theories, the last seems to him the only one consistent with the real nature and dignity of the soul and the majesty of the divine action in the process.[1] His arguments are of a singular character, and will hardly bear to be repeated. In a strict sense, it is needless to say that they are not arguments at all. His mind makes no advance in the subject from the early poem, which condenses his dreams in more fitting and fresher shape than the essay. If such a subject is to be handled at all, a "Platonical Song" is the most appropriate vehicle; and the reveries of the singer may interest or amuse when the reasonings of the essayist weary and repel. "I would sing," he begins—

> "The pre-existency
> Of human souls, and live once more again,
> By recollection and quick memory,
> All what is past since first we all began.
> But all too shallow be my wits to scan
> So deep a point, and mind too dull to clear
> So dark a matter. But Thou, O more than man,

[1] Imm. of Soul, B. II., c. xii.

Aread, then, sacred bard of Plotin deare;
Tell what we mortals are, tell what of old we were.

A spark or ray of the Divinity,
Clouded in earthy fogs, yclad in clay,
A precious drop, sunk from Eternity,
Spilt on the ground, or rather slunk away;
For then we fell when we 'gan first t' assay
By stealth of our own selves something to been,
Uncentring ourselves from our great Stay,
Which fondly we new liberty did ween;
And from that prank right jolly wights ourselves did deem."[1]

In this poem he not only sings the soul's pre-existency, but gives expression to all his notions—subsequently developed in the Essay on Immortality—of various vehicles of spiritual being. He could not, any more than Cudworth, conceive of spirit apart from body or expression. Even the Divine Spirit was to him "Res Extensa," a Supreme Activity, manifesting itself in space; and created spirits arranged themselves below the Divine in a hierarchy of manifestation less tenuous and pure as they approached the earth. The Alexandrian mysticism had filtered something of the old Gnosticism into his speculations; and no doubt it is the very same difficulty over which Gnosticism pondered as to the connection betwixt heaven and earth — the Divine and the human — which gives the cue to all More's philosophy. On the one hand, Hobbism seemed to him to cut away the upper, heavenly, or Divine sphere altogether, leaving nothing beyond the world of sense and utility. On the other hand, Cartesianism drew a sharp and

[1] The Pre-existency of the Soul, c. ii. and iii.

ineffaceable line of distinction between spirit and matter—thought and extension. The two worlds appeared dissociated as bare mind and bare mechanism—a great chasm between, without lines of intersection or points of fusion.[1] Both views were almost equally intolerable to his divinely intoxicated genius, which saw the spiritual everywhere, and God's great fecundity filling all things—

> "Stretching out Himself in all degrees,
> His wisdom, goodness, and due equity
> Are rightly ranked; in all the soul them sees.
> O holy lamps of God! O sacred eyes!
> Filled with love and wonder everywhere.
> Ye wandering tapers, to whom God descries
> His secret path, great Psyche's darling dear."[2]

He imagined at least three definite stages of soul-development or manifestation—ethereal, aerial, and terrestrial—"in every one whereof there may be several degrees of purity and impurity, which yet need not amount to a new species." The myriad spirit-world, "undrest as yet," wait their time "for generation fit," and at length find habitation in an appropriate vehicle. In the poem the destiny of the soul is conceived as a descent, beginning with the "celestial or fiery cloud"—

> "The orb of pure, quick life and sense,
> Which the thrice mighty Mercury of yore
> Ascending, held with angels' conference,
> And of their comely shapes had perfect cognoscence.
>
> Sphere of pure sense which no perpessions curb,
> Nor uncouth shapen spectres ever can disturb.

[1] "It seems not so probable to me that nature admits of so great a chasm."—Imm. of Soul, c. xiv.

[2] The Pre-existency of the Soul, c. x.

Next this is that light vehicle of air,
Where likewise all sense is in each part pight.
This is more gross, subject to grief and fear,
And most-what soiled with bodily delight,
Sometimes with vengeance, envie, anger, spight,
This Orb is ever passive in sensation.
But the third wagon of the soul, that hight
The terrene vehicle, beside this passion
Hath organised sense distinct by limitation.

These last be but the soul's live sepulchres,
Where least of all she acts, but afterward
Rose from this tomb, she free and lively fares
And upward goes, if she be not debarred
By too long bondage in this Cave below." [1]

In the Essay he traverses the same round of speculation, but more from the conception of an ascending series of developments awaiting the human soul after death. There are very few that arrive at once at the celestial or ethereal vehicle "immediately upon their quitting the terrestrial one—that heavenly chariot necessarily carrying us in triumph to the greatest happiness the soul of man is capable of—which would arrive to all men indifferently, good and bad, if the parting with this earthly body would suddenly mount us into the heavenly. Wherefore, by a just Nemesis, the souls of men that are not very heroically virtuous will find themselves restrained within the compass of this caliginous air, as both reason itself will suggest and the Platonists have unanimously determined." [2] The duration of the soul's abode in these various vehicles is very different. "The shortest of all is that of the terres-

[1] The Pre-existency of the Soul, c. xiii., xiv., xv., xvi.

[2] Imm. of Soul, B. II. c. xiv.

trial vehicle; in the aerial, the soul may inhabit many ages; and in the æthereal, forever." [1]

To all this hierarchy of spiritual development, More of course adds on with Cudworth the idea of a spirit of nature, a dumb inarticulate spirit, "without sense and animadversion, pervading the whole matter of the universe, and exercising a plastical power therein;" producing "such phenomena as cannot be resolved into mere mechanical powers." [2] One of his main arguments for the existence of such a spirit, it is curious to notice, is the phenomenon of gravity. The law of gravity, it is to be remembered, was not yet discovered; and the descent of heavy bodies to the earth seemed to More only capable of explanation as the impulse of "some immaterial cause, such as we call *the spirit of nature*, or *inferior soul of the world*, that must direct the motions of the ethereal particles to act upon those grosser bodies to drive them towards the earth." The "immediate corporeal cause," he agreed with Descartes, "was the ethereal matter abounding in the air more than in grosser bodies;" but as usual he superadded a spiritual element to the Cartesian mechanics. He enters also into a long polemic with Hobbes on the subject, which is not only now without interest, but hardly intelligible.

(*d*) In turning finally to view More as a moralist, we emerge from the dim twilight of speculation in which we have been faintly following him. His 'Enchiridium Ethicum' is perhaps the most compact, clear, and generally intelligible of all his works.

[1] Ibid. [2] Ibid., B. III. c. xii.

It is, moreover, compendious, and answers truly to its title of a "Manual." Somewhat singularly, considering this character, and the definite outline of ethical doctrine which the treatise contains, it has passed comparatively out of sight; and while Cudworth always occupies a prominent position in a historical review of English moral philosophy, More is frequently omitted altogether.[1] His Ethics is almost as forgotten as his Metaphysics, although in its day it passed into a second edition within two years.

We have already explained the origin of More's Ethics in connection with Cudworth's long-deferred labours on the same subject.[2] The letter we then quoted, addressed to Worthington, sets all the circumstances before us; and he tells them over again, very much in the same language, in his preface to the Manual. Friends importuned him very much in the years following the Restoration "to write a short Ethicks." The times seemed urgently to call for such a work. The spirit of inquiry, everywhere awakened, and searching, as he says, for the "causes of all things, would not rest short of 'right reason' in this as in other matters."[3] He was reluctant, however, to undertake the task on various accounts: he knew that his friend Dr Cudworth had been long

[1] Mackintosh, for example, makes no mention of More in his well-known Dissertation; neither does Professor Bain in his recent 'Compendium of Mental and Moral Science,' in which he gives a review of ethical systems (Part II.) Whewell, however, in his Lectures on 'The History of Moral Philosophy in England,' has noticed him with appreciation, and given a brief summary of his ethical doctrine, lect. iii.

[2] See p. 215 of this volume.

[3] Ad Lectorem.

meditating an elaborate work on morals; he was absorbed in what appeared to him more agreeable and exciting studies—his speculations as to the existence of God and the immortality of the soul; and especially, he had no faith in making people virtuous by "fine systems" of morality. He emphasises this latter reason particularly in his preface. Mere definitions and rules of moral philosophy, he says, have no force against vice and baseness. Vice can only be overcome by active virtue, and such virtue can only be taught by divine faith in God and His living Word.[1] He yielded, however, to the importunity of his friends, and once entered upon his task, he pursued it not without pleasure. So far as Dr Cudworth was concerned, he was led to believe that his own, "being a small treatise running through the whole body of ethics," would not interfere with his larger design.

There is, in fact, little, if any, resemblance betwixt More's treatise and Cudworth's. The latter is devoted to a special point of great importance—the essence or radical character of morality. The former is really, as it professes to be, an "Ethical Manual." It is composed in Latin. It "runs" through the whole subject, and treats of it briefly but comprehensively in three divisions or books. In the first the author discusses the general question of ethics, and explains the nature of the ethical life or virtue—its conditions and instruments. In the second he gives a very arbitrary but elaborate classification of the virtues, or the principal elements of morality. And in the third

[1] Ibid.

book, after a defence of Free Will as the essential condition of all morality, he treats specially of the ethical art, or the means of acquiring virtue. In direct contrast to Cudworth, he views the subject from the beginning mainly in its practical or useful aspect, and defines morality not so much in itself as in its end. It is, he says in his opening sentence, the "art of living well and happily." Goodness and happiness are to him identical—merely different aspects of the highest law of our being, or what the ancient moralists spoke of as the *summum bonum.*

"Beatitude," therefore, is the same as morality, or the ethical life. It is the distinguishing quality or definition of this life. And in what is it found? What are its conditions and instruments? It is not found in the intellect, and does not peculiarly belong to it as its property[1]—in this respect also differing from Cudworth, who makes good and evil, justice and injustice, intuitions of the pure reason. The special seat of morality is in a certain "boniform faculty," by which we instinctively and absolutely deem what is best, and delight in it alone.[2] It is the mind, not in the mere exercise of reason, but acting *ex sensu virtutis*, which brings us within the moral sphere. This is the highest and truly divine side of our being, corresponding to τὸ ἀγαθόν in the Platonic Deity. It is the side, moreover, which may be cultivated by all men. For all men are capable of the love of God and their neighbours, and this divine love is the highest form and best fruit of the "boniform faculty." At the same time, the intellec-

[1] Enchirid. Eth., Lib. I. c. ii. 5. [2] Ibid.

tual and the divine are never to be separated. Morality is always agreeable to right reason, and in its nature, essence, and verity comes within its cognisance. Only it requires something more than reason—a certain divine instinct or special faculty of good—to apprehend it in life, and realise it.[1] "To estimate the fruit of virtue by that imaginary knowledge of it which is acquired by mere definition, is very much the same as if one were to estimate the nature of fire from a fire painted on the wall, which has no power whatever to keep off the winter's cold. Every vital good is perceived and judged by life and sense. True virtue is a certain intimate life, not any external form visible to the outward eyes." "If you have ever *been* this, you have *seen* this." This, which he quotes from Plotinus, he appropriates as the secret of all true moral science.

Such being the nature and conditions of virtue—the crown and summit of our practical life—the passions are to be regarded as its ministers or instruments. They are not evil in themselves, but only in their abuse—the beneficent purpose of Divine Providence being no less clearly shown in them than in our bodily organs. In this respect he signalises his opposition to the Stoics. By a passion he means any impression of sense affecting the mind and influencing its judgment, or any idiosyncrasy of constitution or education.[2] All such impulses are strictly natural, and therefore part of the human order, to be controlled and regulated, and not extirpated. He compares them to the winds in the external world, which

[1] Ibid., c. v. 1.

[2] Ibid., Lib. I. c. vi. 2.

purify the air and prevent stagnation.[1] So the passions stir our blood and stimulate the moral system, by which it gains larger experience and a higher degree of happiness, which, in More's conception, is equivalent to an increase of moral power. The plastic nature, of which the heart is the centre, is the seat of the passions—the perceptive nature, with the brain as its chief organ, being the seat of the reason; and while both enter equally into the human constitution, it is yet the business of the higher to control the lower. In other words, human life is a *constitution*, order, or polity, in which the mind or reason does not stand alone, but surrounded by its ministers, whom it ought to govern. It ought to dominate not only the passions, but the *spirit of nature*, to overcome whose enchantments it requires to be enforced by divine aid.[2]

In his enumeration of the passions, More professes to follow Descartes closely. According to the French philosopher, there are only six primitive passions—viz., admiration, love, hatred, desire, joy, and sadness. All the others are composed from these, or are species under these *genera*.[3] Our moralist thinks that they may be reduced to the three first. For what, he asks, is desire, but love turned towards a future good; and what joy but love exulting in the beloved

[1] Ibid., 3.

[2] "Palam est igitur Regnum quoddam in nobis esse sive Principatum, Animumque nostrum rem esse non adeò solitariam, sed satis numeroso stipatam satellitio, nec in proprias solum passiones imperium habere, sed in ipsum *Naturæ Spiritum*, cujus incantamenta et illecebras, diviniori quadam magia fretus, comprimere potest vel extinguere."—Lib. I. c. 6, 10. Dr Whewell has quoted this passage (Lectures, III.), but imperfectly.

[3] Lib. I., c. 7 (3). Descartes, Les Passions de l'Ame, Part II., Art. 69, p. 94, vol. IV. Cousin's Ed.

presence of good; and what sadness, except hatred enfolded and oppressed by present evil?[1] He then arranges them in several classes. Admiration stands by itself as a passion of the first class; love and hatred are of the second; desire, in its various manifestations, forms the third; and joy and sadness, although only modifications of love and hatred, make a fourth and final class. He treats of them in succession, and their functions and uses. Many of his observations are highly pertinent and interesting, and anticipate some of the results of later analysis in a very different school from his own. He points out, for example, the distinction betwixt glory and shame, how the former stimulates our higher nature, and the latter checks our lower.[2] Anger is a conspicuous part of retributive justice, and by no means to be confounded with hatred. All the family of irascible passions (*θυμοειδὲς*) are highly useful and necessary, since it concerns us more to drive away evil than to rejoice in superfluous good.[3] Quoting from an ancient author,[4] he represents desire as the purveyor and resentment as the soldier of the moral state.

In this idea or picture of a moral constitution in man, it is difficult to say whether More had any reference to Hobbes. He mentions him only once, which is all the more remarkable since he quotes so frequently from Descartes and the ancient moralists.[5]

[1] Ibid., i. c. 7 (5).
[2] Ibid., i. c. 11 (10).
[3] Ibid., i. c. 11 (9).
[4] Theagis, i. c. 11 (8).
[5] Lib. III. c. 1, 6. Of ancient authorities he quotes especially Aristotle (both the Magna Moralia and the Nicomachæan Ethics), the Neo-Platonists, Cicero (the Tusculan Questions), and Marcus Antoninus.

His conception of human nature is clearly marked off from that of his great contemporary. With certain affinities not to be found in Cudworth arising out of a more living and comprehensive view of all the facts, his discrepancy of doctrine is equally radical. Hobbes's analysis, interesting as it is in many of its details, nowhere rises to a similar unity of conception. The individual man remains a mere congeries of instinctive and clashing appetites, till he is brought within the control of the body politic, and so reduced to a moral condition. With More, on the other hand, no less than with Cudworth, the distinctive or supreme aspect of human nature is divine, and all appetites and passions, while no less really parts of nature, with their due offices and objects, yet fall into proper subordination to the higher divine faculty or reason, which distinguishes man, and stamps him a moral being.

The remaining books of More's Ethics are less important, and may be hastily summarised. Having treated of virtue *in genere*, he devotes the second book to the virtues *in specie*. His classification of virtues, we have already said, is very arbitrary. In place of the four cardinal virtues of the ancients,[1] he enumerates only three, corresponding to the three primitive passions—viz., prudence, sincerity, and patience. Prudence answers to admiration, sincerity to desire, and patience to resentment.[2] Justice, courage, and temperance are reckoned next in order as

[1] Wisdom, courage, justice, temperance.

[2] Lib. II. c. i. 1.—He here changes his nomenclature, and even somewhat his analysis of the primitive passions.

the three principal derivative virtues, while justice again is subdivided into piety and probity.[1] There are various subordinate virtues enumerated and described, such as liberality, gratitude, veracity, candour, urbanity, fidelity; and a chapter is devoted to the discussion of the Aristotelic mean (c. ix.) Finally, he sums up all virtue in *intellectual* love, which he interprets to be love of the highest good. This is the highest name and true measure of all morality. All special virtues spring from this, and may be resolved into it. Just as numbers spring from unity, and may be measured by it, so intellectual love, as a simple and single principle, is the source and rule of all diverse forms of good.[2]

The third book contains an excellent defence of Free Will as the basis of morality. Against the Theological Necessitarians who deny contingency, More argues clearly that God Himself can alone know what events are necessary and what contingent. Prescience of such events either implies a contradiction or not. But to suppose a contradiction is virtually to say that the prescience is not divine. Contradictory objects cannot come within the sphere of the divine omniscience. And if there is no contradiction, we may recognise in this very fact that there is no inconsistency betwixt the divine prescience and Free Will. Either way, no solid argument can be drawn against moral liberty from the idea of divine prescience.[3] Again, the whole force of the objections as to the Will always following what appears for the moment best, More supposes to be met by the

[1] Ibid., c. iv., v. [2] Ibid., II. c. ix. 14, 15, 16. [3] Lib. III., c. ii. 2.

simple experience that the good we know we frequently do not do. Our works are not determined by our knowledge of what is best. We may have fine ideas of virtue, and yet never put them in practice. Our freedom in this sense is only too real; and it is the very object of morality to bring the idea and the will into unison, and so enlighten the one and discipline the other that they may attain to the highest good.

The character of More's genius and thought has been sufficiently set before our readers. As a thinker he is much less systematic, but more fertile and genial, than Cudworth. He is poet, moralist, and mystic, rather than thinker. It is difficult to bring his varied speculations to a unity, or to fix his opinions into a definite system. His attitude is sufficiently determinate; but his sympathies and views are apt to vary with his temporary enthusiasms and the altered pressure of the moral and theological atmosphere around him. He is never inconsistent with himself—whether commending Descartes or abusing him—whether warning Lady Conway against the Quakers, and exposing their fanaticism, or transported by the wonder-working vagaries of Van Helmont or the ghost-stories of Glanvill. But his genius is rich, complex, and enthusiastic—swayed by passionate and lofty emotion—rather than clear, penetrating, and illumined by a definitely rational purpose. He is less philosopher or theologian than prophet and gnostic—with his mind brimful of divine ideas, in the delighted contemplation of

which he lives, and moves, and writes. All his works are inspired by a desire to make known something that he himself has felt of the Divine. The invisible or celestial, so far from being hard for him to apprehend, is his familiar haunt. He has difficulty in letting himself down from the higher region of supernal realities to the things of earth. This celestial elevation is the most marked feature at once of his character and his mind. It is the key to his beautiful serenity and singular spiritual complacency—a complacency never offensive, yet raising him somewhat above common sympathy. It is the source of the dreamy imaginings and vague aerial conjectures which fill his books. These may seem to us now poor and unreal, and some of them absurd, but they were to him living and substantial. Nay, they were the life and substance of all his thought. He felt himself at home moving in the heavenly places, and discoursing of things which it hath not entered into the ordinary mind to conceive or utter. He was a spiritual realist. It was his passion and study so to feel and describe divine facts, that others might see and know them as he himself did. Thus it was that he delighted to dwell on such subjects as the existence of God and the immortality of the soul; and felt that when he was drawn aside from these, even to ethical questions and rules, he was drawn from a pleasant and congenial atmosphere to a dry and uninviting one.

The substantive value of More's thought cannot be judged high. It is impossible indeed to overestimate the tone, character, and spiritual ideal after

which he aimed in all his life and work. But so far as the progress of truth is concerned—the removal of prejudice—the simplification of belief—the conciliation of natural and spiritual knowledge—he accomplished little. With all his enthusiasm of reason, he is an imperfect representative of the rational movement. The Cambridge philosophy, while it showed in him some of its finest fruit, yet also brought forth in him all its weakness. The Neo-Platonic extravagances which lay hidden in it from the first, came in his writings into luxuriant blossom. Originally a protest against spiritual fanaticism, no less than dogmatic bigotry, it remained free in all its course from any taint of the latter; but it certainly reached in More a new species of fanaticism. He is not merely inspired, but possessed by his favourite ideas. They not only guide but dominate him, and sometimes in the most traditionary and outworn forms. They are never kept calmly before him in an attitude of inquiry. His aim is not to purify, enlarge, and harmonise them, but to teach them even in exaggerated and fantastic forms. All this bespeaks the decadence rather than the growth of reason.

Withal, More is true to the two great springs of the movement. He loves inquiry, although he is himself an imperfect inquirer. He never shrinks from reason, if he fails to give it free play and scope, and to draw it into the full light of day. Again, he believes profoundly in the harmony of natural and spiritual truth. He has lost the threads of this harmony, and some of his own speculations have rather tended to obscure than to illuminate it. But

if he must be pronounced in many things a spiritual dreamer rather than a Christian Rationalist, his dreams are not merely of a higher world, fashioned by his own imaginings, but of a cosmos of nature and spirit—of life here and life hereafter, united by continuity of effort in the beneficent designs of divine love.

VI.

MINOR MEMBERS OF THE CAMBRIDGE SCHOOL.

CULVERWEL, WORTHINGTON, RUST, PATRICK, FOWLER, GLANVILL, NORRIS.

THERE are several less important members of the Cambridge fraternity who deserve commemoration. With one exception, none of them can be said to have enriched or modified the impulse of thought in which they shared, while the most prominent belong, in their full ecclesiastical and theological activity, to the new political type of latitudinarianism which came into vogue at the Revolution, to which our historical survey in these volumes is not designed to extend. Yet we must glance at several names intimately connected with the great teachers whose labours we have been reviewing, without some notice of whom the picture of the Cambridge school in its full characteristics would remain imperfect.

Most of these names have already been mentioned in our pages, and their literary and personal connections in some degree indicated. Worthington, Rust, Fowler, and Patrick, for example, have come before us more than once. They were all Cambridge

men, and more or less satellites of the party. Some of them bore to its chief members very definite and special relations. We shall sketch their position and relations somewhat more fully, and fill in such particulars regarding them as may seem significant. None of those now mentioned, save Patrick, have left writings which give them any prominent distinction in English theological literature, and their personality has barely lifted them above the obscurity which so rapidly overtakes inferior workers in every intellectual department.

There is one name, however, hitherto little mentioned in our pages, which claims attention before any of these—that of Nathaniel Culverwel, author of a 'Discourse of the Light of Nature.' Culverwel came forth from the bosom of the school, and was in some respects one of its most remarkable products. Both chronologically and in point of intellectual significance, he deserves to stand at the head of our subordinate list. The 'Discourse of the Light of Nature' appeared in 1652, and in genius and wealth of thought it claims the very highest rank. It is, moreover, a distinct variety in the literature of the school—one of its most characteristic manifestations, and yet discrepant from its special theology. Not even John Smith's discourses are more instinct with a lofty ideality and all the glow and beauty of a luminous yet impassioned imagination. Few writings of any age show a rarer and finer spiritual insight, or teem with fruits of a more largely developed thoughtfulness. It is almost a poem in its grandeur and harmony of conception,

and the lyrical enthusiasm with which it chants the praises of Reason. And yet Culverwel was a Calvinist, and the first edition of his discourse bears the imprimatur of Edward Calamy, and was dedicated to Whichcote's Puritan correspondent and critic, Antony Tuckney. This gives a peculiar interest to his connection with the school, and reveals in a striking light the strength of its influence in those early years, when Whichcote was in his full activity as a preacher, and the fresh life of his sermons was moving many minds. It is hardly possible to avoid the suspicion that Culverwel was in Tuckney's view, in some of the allusions which he makes in his letters to the effects of Whichcote's teaching on the "young ones" of the University.[1] The youthful genius who had celebrated Reason in his discourse in such felicitous and glowing language, had just closed his brief career when these letters were written.

Of Culverwel, even more truly than of John Smith, there is no biography. His name is not even found in any biographical dictionary.[2] The year of his birth is unknown, and his parentage is uncertain. There seems little doubt, however, that he was de-

[1] This conjecture has occurred to the modern editor of Culverwel's discourse—the late Dr John Brown of Edinburgh—to whose careful and loving appreciation we owe the beautiful edition which appeared from the press of the Messrs Constable in 1857. The result is, that Culverwel alone, of all the Cambridge divines, may be said to be critically edited, and so to survive in a form suited to the modern reader. It is seldom that editorial work is done so well as by Dr Brown in this case—so fully, and yet so concisely, with so much real learning, and yet so little pedantry.

[2] Not even in Phillip's recent Dictionary of Biographical Refer-

scended from a race of Culverwels who, in the beginning of the century, and even before, were noted for their Puritanism. Probably he was the son or nephew of Ezekiel Culverwel, rector of a parish in Essex, and author of a popular 'Treatise on Faith,' published in 1623—a friend of the well-known Dr Sibbs, who edited a small volume by him after his death, and describes him as "a man very well experienced in all the ways of God." Nathaniel was sent to Emmanuel College in 1633. He is entered in that year as a pensioner. Whichcote was then a Fellow of the College, and John Smith began his studies three years later. He graduated as Master in 1640, the same year in which Smith took his Bachelor's degree. He afterwards became a Fellow, and for some time before his death was a regular preacher in the college chapel. He was, therefore, in the very centre of the Platonic movement in its earlier form. He must have heard Whichcote often preach—probably those very sermons complained of by Tuckney, in which Reason was so much "cried up." John Smith and he could hardly fail being friends—with so much in common. Their very differences may have been a source of mutual interest. For there seems no doubt of Culverwel's hearty Puritanism. In one of his smaller pieces[1] he speaks of the public men of the time in the usual Puritan style as "Zerubbabels and Jehoshuas building God a temple."

ence, which is very elaborate, and contains some names twice over: London, 1871. This fact is noted by Dr Brown.

[1] 'Mount Ebal,' originally published, as well as some other minor pieces, along with 'The Light of Nature.'

In the Discourse, however, little remains of his Puritan Calvinism, save its distilled and finer essence of spiritual rapture. A few traces of dogmatic narrowness are manifest here and there, but never in a harsh form.

The date of Culverwel's death, as of his birth, is unknown. It probably took place about a year before the publication of the Discourse, and in circumstances of deep affliction of some kind or another. The hints which are conveyed in his brother's Address to the Reader seem to point to something of the nature of mental aberration, during which the youthful genius had exposed himself to the criticism of his friends "as one whose eyes were lofty, and whose eyelids lifted up, who bare himself too high upon a conceit of his parts,—although they that knew him intimately are most willing to be his compurgators in this particular." The original editor of the Discourse[1] seems to indicate something of the same kind in acknowledging Tuckney's kindness to the author, "especially when he lay under the discipline of so sad a providence." A mind so finely strung as that of Culverwel, so soaring and passionate in its yearnings after truth, and so susceptible to all influences of life and nature, can readily be supposed to have lost its balance, and in the very sublimity of its aspirations to have gone astray. It is barely possible, also, that some conflict arising out of his

[1] A Dr Dillingham, of whom little seems known, except that he succeeded Tuckney in the mastership of Emmanuel College, and is supposed to have translated into Latin the Westminster Confession and Catechisms.

peculiar religious position may have plunged him into perplexity, and helped to unsettle his thoughts; although there is no evidence of this in the Discourse itself. It is singularly radiant and hopeful in its religious confidence.

The orginal editor says of the 'Discourse of the Light of Nature,' that its "design was on the one hand to vindicate the use of reason in matters of religion from the aspersions and prejudices of some weaker ones in those times, who, having entertained erroneous opinions which they were in no way able to defend, were taught by their more cunning seducers to wink hard, and except against all offensive weapons; so, on the other hand, to chastise the sauciness of Socinus and his followers, who dare set Hagar above her mistress, and make faith wait at the elbow of corrupt and distorted reason."[1] As it stands, the use of reason, and the special nobility of its function in the search after truth, form its main theme. The conciliation of reason and faith in refutation of the Socinians, and all who disparaged the mysteries of the Gospel, was to form the second and more important part of the treatise, which the author did not live to complete. This is to be borne in mind in judging of his opinions. He stands "in the midst, between two adversaries of extreme persuasions," and while "he opposes the one he seems to favour the other more than is meet." But "judge candidly," says the editor, "and take his opinion as thou wouldst do his picture, sitting,—not from a luxuriant expression, wherein he always

[1] Discourse: To the Reader, p. 6. Brown's ed.

allowed for the shrinking, but from his declared judgment when he speaks professedly of such a subject."[1]

The author himself announces, in the Porch or Introduction to his Discourse, that his ultimate aim was the reconciliation of faith and of reason,—"to give unto reason the things that are reason's, and unto faith the things that are faith's; to give faith her full scope and latitude, and to give reason also her just bounds and limits."[2] He then launches into a high-toned comparison of the two, which gradually passes into an eloquent defence of reason from the aspersions which some had cast upon her. "This" (reason) "is the first-born, but the other has the blessing. There is a twin-light springing from both, and they both spring from the same fountain of light, and they both severally conspire in the same end—the glory of that being from which they shine, and the welfare and happiness of that being upon which they shine. . . . To blaspheme reason is to reproach Heaven itself, and to dishonour the God of reason, to question the beauty of His image."[3] Some, however, are "so strangely prejudiced" that the very name of reason, especially in a pulpit, must needs have at least a thousand heresies couched in it. "What would these men have?" he exclaims. "Would they be banished from their own essences? would they forfeit and renounce their understandings? or have they any to forfeit or disclaim? Would they put out the candle of the Lord, intellectuals of His own lighting? or have they any to

[1] Ibid., p. 7. [2] Ibid.—Introd., p. 17. [3] Ibid., p. 17, 18.

put out? Would they creep into some lower species, and go a-grazing with Nebuchadnezzar among the beasts of the field? or are they not there already? Oh, what hard thoughts have these men of religion! Do they look upon it only as a bird of prey, that comes to peck out the eyes of men?"[1]

He admits that "the eye of reason is weakened," but then this is no reason for plucking it out. Leah is not to be hated merely "because she is blear-eyed." "Is it not better to enjoy the faint and languishing light of this 'candle of the Lord,' than to be in palpable and disconsolate darkness? There are indeed but a few seminal sparks left in the ashes, and must there be whole floods of water cast upon them to quench them? It is but an old imperfect manuscript, with some broken periods, some letters worn out; must they therefore, with an unmerciful indignation, rend it, and tear it asunder?" It is granted that "the picture has lost its gloss and beauty, the oriency of its colours, the elegancy of its lineaments, the comeliness of its proportions; must it therefore be totally defaced? must it be made one great blot? and must the very frame of it be broken in pieces?"[2] Reason, moreover, is conscious of her deficiencies. The very apprehension of her weakness comes from herself. "When awakened, she feels her own wounds, bears her own jarrings, sees the dimness of her own sight. Reason herself has made many sad complaints unto you; she has told you often, and that with tears in her eyes, what a great shipwreck she has suffered, what goods she has lost, how hardly she escaped

[1] Ibid., p. 19.

[2] Ibid., p. 20.

with a poor decayed being; she has shown you often some broken relics, as the sad remembrance of her former riches. She had nothing but two or three jewels about her, two or three common notions, and would you rob her of them also?"[1] Or is reason offensive because she cannot grasp and comprehend the things of God? "Vain men! will they pluck out their eyes because they cannot look upon the sun in his brightness and glory? What though reason cannot enter the 'holy of holies,' and pierce within the veil? May it not, notwithstanding, be as the porch at the gate of the Temple called Beautiful, and be a doorkeeper in the house of God?"[2] Reason has been accused of "wrangling against the mysteries of salvation;" but it is not "right," but "distorted reason," that ever does this. Nor is it a valid objection, that errors are sometimes introduced under "the fair disguise of so beautiful a name," and have some tincture of reason in them. It is "becoming to put a good face on things," and everything, in so far as it is really rational, is good. Even error is better with "some tincture of reason" than without it. He acknowledges, at the same time, its abuse in commending what he thinks erroneous. "Thus Arminianism pleads for itself under the specious notion of God's love to mankind. Thus that silly error of Antinomianism will needs style itself an 'Evangelical honeycomb'!"[3] Finally, reason is the best help for disentangling all difficulties. It prepares and fortifies the mind against deception, by the very fact that it reveals its liability to go astray.

[1] Ibid., p. 20. [2] Ibid., p. 21. [3] Ibid., p. 28.

Some men's reason is not so well advanced and improved as it might be. "A sharper edge would quickly cut such difficulties asunder. Some have more defined and clarified intellectuals, more vigorous and sparkling eyes than others, and one soul differs from another in glory; and that reason which can make some shift to maintain error, might with a great deal less sweat and pains maintain a truth."[1]

Culverwel employs himself in his second chapter in explaining the phrase "the Candle of the Lord,"[2] which he has already used as identical with Reason. He does this in a manner to suggest that the discourse was originally delivered from the pulpit; and it is curious to reflect how the text of Proverbs containing this phrase was bandied about betwixt the disputants of the period. Tuckney accuses Whichcote of "over-frequently" quoting it, and the true meaning and application of it are among the subjects debated in their letters. Culverwel is more ingenious than satisfactory in some of his comments, but he deduces fairly enough that "the proper and genuine meaning of the place" is, "that God hath breathed into all the sons of men reasonable souls, which may serve as so many candles to enlighten and direct them in the searching out their Creator—in the discovering of other inferior beings, and themselves also."[3] In short, he finds in the words "a brief commendation of Natural Light, or the Light of Reason;"[4] and then with the view of "further clearing,"

[1] Ibid., p. 24.

[2] Prov. xx. 27: "The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord," &c.

[3] Ibid., p. 29.

[4] Ibid., p. 31.

and entering upon his subject, he proceeds to inquire: 1. "What Nature is? 2. What the law of Nature is? 3. What the light of Nature is?"

These inquiries occupy him in the remainder of the treatise; and although here and there his style is ornate to a fault, and the tone of the pulpit lingers in reiterative and imaginative emphasis, which occasionally blurs rather than brightens his meaning, it is impossible not to be struck with the range of knowledge and wide capacity of thought, as well as richness of illustration, which it everywhere displays. Not to speak of the philosophers of antiquity, who were the natural text-books of the school, he deals familiarly with all the great writers of the time, Bacon and Descartes (Hobbes had scarcely yet emerged), Selden, Grotius, and Salmasius; and, amongst smaller philosophers, Sir Kenelm Digby and Lord Brooke.[1] He is especially just to the speculations of Suarez and Lord Herbert in the preceding age, and finds in the latter a distinct support for his own theory of knowledge, as involving both elements of thought and (sensational) experience. While contending strongly for the subjective side of knowledge—"some clear and indelible principles, some first and alphabetical notion stamped and printed upon the being of man"[2]—he yet opposes what he believes to be the extreme Platonic doctrine of the soul's originating knowledge of itself, and communicating independently its own light to the objects of experience.[3]

[1] Robert Greville, Lord Brooke, eulogised by Milton in his 'Areopagitica,' and author of a treatise on the 'Nature of Truth: its Union and Unity with the Soule,' &c. Lond. 1641.

[2] Chap. vii. p. 81.

[3] Chap. x. p. 124.

The whole theory of Pre-existence, which proved such a snare to the mind of More and others of the school, is set aside by him as irrational. Plato "might as well fancy such implanted ideas such seeds of light in his external eye, as such seminal principles in the eye of the mind." The Platonists were right in exalting reason, and looking upon the spirit of a man as "the candle of the Lord," but "they were deceived in the time when it was lighted." Man has only to reflect to be convinced that he brings no "connate ideas," as Culverwel calls them, into the world with him. "Do but analyse your own thoughts, do but consult with your own breasts; tell us whence it was that the light first sprang in upon you. Had you such notions as these when you first passed into being? Had you these connate 'ideas' in the cradle? and were they rocked asleep with you? Or did you then meditate upon these principles—'The whole is greater than the part,' and 'nothing can be, and not be, at the same time.' Never tell us that you wanted organical dispositions, for you plainly have recourse to the sensitive powers, and must needs subscribe to this, that all knowledge comes flourishing in at these lattices."[1] In short, the capacity or faculty of knowledge is from within—the content of it from without. We have no innate or connate ideas, but ideas are born of our original powers, "the beginning of the soul's strength, espoused to their virgin objects, closing and complying with them long before discourse (reasoning) can reach them—nay, with such objects as discourse cannot reach at all."[2]

[1] Chap. v. p. 126. [2] Ibid., p. 128.

We have been led into this explanation of Culverwel's general position as a thinker, in connection with what he says of Lord Herbert, whose views he is setting forth with sympathy and approval in the last quotation. His theory of knowledge is intimately connected with his special argument. Nature is to him a great order, embracing the spiritual and material; the law of Nature is the reflection of the Eternal Law, which is nothing else than God Himself; and Reason is at once the light which discerns the law and the subject which obeys it. There is some indistinctness in the sequence of his thoughts; but his views in detail are clear and admirable. Nothing can be finer than his vindication of the true meaning both of Nature and of Law, in contradistinction to the current modern perversion of both these words. "Why bodies only," he says, "should engross and monopolise natural philosophy, and why a soul cannot be admitted into it, unless it bring a certificate and *commendamus* from the body, is a thing altogether unaccountable, unless it be resolved into a mere arbitrary determination and a *philosophical* kind of tyranny.[1] . . . Herein Plato was defective, that he did not correct and reform the abuse of this word Nature; that he did not screw it up to a higher and more spiritual notion. For it is very agreeable to the eternal and supremest Being. Nature is that regular line which the wisdom of God Himself has drawn in being."[2]

Law, again, he defines as characteristically moral in its essence. We may speak of God setting a law

[1] Ibid., p. 33. [2] Ibid., p. 37, 38.

to the winds and the waves; but such things are at the most but "tendencies and gravitations," and not "the fruits of a legislative power. A rational creature only is capable of law which is a moral restraint, and so cannot reach to those things which are necessitated."[1] It is necessary in order to constitute a law that it not only flow forth and express the Divine Being, but that it be clearly promulgated by the Divine Will. There must be "the voice of the trumpet." "'Law is for a public good, and it must be made known in a public manner."[2] "Law is founded on the intellectuals—on the reason—not on the sensitive principle. It supposes a noble and free-born creature, for where there is no liberty there is no law—a law being nothing else than a rational restraint and limitation of absolute liberty. Now all liberty is 'radically in the intellect,' and such creatures as have no light have no choice—no moral variety."[3] Mere sensitive creatures "are absolute Antinomians."

"The law of Nature is 'hatched' by Reason from those 'first and oval principles of her own laying, scattered in the soul, and filling it with a vigorous pregnancy, a multiplying fruitfulness, so that it brings forth a numerous and sparkling posterity of secondary notions." As specimens of these first principles he gives the following: "We must seek good and avoid evil;" "we must seek happiness."[4] He quotes with approval the saying of Bacon, "All morality is nothing but a collection and bundling up of natural precepts." The moralists but "enlarge the fringe of

[1] P. 40, 41. [2] P. 49. [3] Ibid., p. 62. [4] Ibid., p. 81.

Nature's garment."[1] "They are so many commentators and expositors upon Nature's law."[2] It is Reason alone, "as an intellectual lamp in the soul," which discovers and verifies this law. Nowhere does Culverwel show higher sense and penetration than in dealing with this part of his subject.[3] He ridicules the idea of the Jews being the source of all moral and spiritual knowledge, with evident reference to the prevalent delusion of the Cambridge school. "Some say Pythagoras lighted his candle there" (at the Jews' sun), "and Plato also his. Why, did they borrow common notions of them? Was this 'written law'?—only some Jewish manuscript which they translated into Greek. Can Pythagoras know nothing unless a Jew's soul come and inform him? . . . If they will but attend unto Pythagoras himself, they shall hear him resolving these first notions of his and others into Nature's bounty and not into the Jews' courtesy."[4] "This, indeed, must be granted," he adds, "that the whole generality of the heathen went a-gleaning in the Jewish fields. They had some of their grapes, some ears of corn that dropped from them." Yet "Give unto the Jew the things of the Jews, and to the Gentile the things of the Gentiles, and that which God had made common, call not thou peculiar. The apostle's question is here very seasonable: 'Is He the God of the Jews only? Is He not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also.'"[5]

While Reason is the chief voice of Nature's law,

[1] Ibid. [2] P. 83. [3] Chap. viii.
[4] Ibid., p. 94. [5] Ibid., p. 96, 97.

"the consent of nations," in a secondary way, "contributes no small light" to its manifestation. General results can only come from some common cause. "When you see so many rays of the same light shooting themselves into the several corners of the world, you presently look up to the sun as the glorious original of them all." [1] "As face answers to face, so does the heart of one man the heart of another; even the heart of an Athenian the heart of an Indian." Instead of arguing, like Locke, that the diversity of moral practice in the world is inconsistent with any radical or innate moral truth, Culverwel draws the strongest evidence of the universality of certain common notions or principles of material law from the affinities which subsist amongst men, notwithstanding all their differences. "Certainly it is some transcendent beauty that so many nations are enamoured withal. It is some powerful music that sets the whole world a-dancing." "Look upon the diversities of nations, and there you will see a rough and barbarous Scythian, a wild American, an unpolished Indian, a superstitious Egyptian, a subtle Ethiopian, a cunning Arabian, a luxurious Persian, a treacherous Carthagenian, a lying Cretian, an elegant Athenian, a wanton Corinthian, a desperate Italian, a fighting German,—and tell me whether it must not be some admirable and efficacious truth that shall so overpower them all as to pass current amongst them, and be owned and acknowledged by them." [2]

Having thus explained the questions opened by him, Culverwel launches into a panegyrical descrip-

[1] P. 110. [2] P. 113.

tion of Reason as a "derivative light," a "diminutive light," a "certain light,"—as a light "directive," "calm and peaceable," "pleasant," and finally "ascendant," —filling the remaining chapters of the treatise.

It is unnecessary and beyond our space to follow further his eloquent analysis. Everywhere there is the impress of a full and teeming mind, overflowing in its wealth of thought and expression—a mind sometimes too intense and narrow in its judgments, in obedience to early prejudices and training,[1] yet genial even in its narrowness, and far more vivid, rapid, glowing, and poetic in its movements, than any other mind of the school. Smith is, upon the whole, more profound in insight. His vision ranges over a larger area of spiritual contemplation; but even he hardly equals Culverwel in exuberance of genius, and flow and fertility of imaginative thoughtfulness.

After Culverwel, John Worthington deserves the first place on our list. His name has been frequently before us in the course of our survey. He was the original editor of Smith's 'Select Discourses;' and his 'Diary and Correspondence'[2] gives us glimpses into the interior life of the school, of which we have already so far availed ourselves. They are hardly as full and interesting as might have been expected, but they help now and then to

[1] As in his judgment of Pelagianism and Arminianism, and his view of the fate of the wise and good among the heathen —modified as it is—p. 270.

[2] Worthington's 'Diary and Correspondence' were edited for the Chetham Society, Manchester, in 1847, by James Crossley, Esq., to whose careful and interesting labours we have already referred.

light up the picture, heavy in its theological drapery, with a bright and homely touch.

Besides being the editor of Smith's Discourses, Worthington was the correspondent and enthusiastic admirer of both Cudworth and More. He is known himself by a volume of 'Discourses,' first published by his son in 1725, and since republished; and also by a smaller volume of 'Miscellanies,' which appeared earlier, in 1704. He was a native of Manchester, and educated at Emanuel College, where Whichcote and Cudworth had preceded him, and which Smith probably entered about the same time. He was chosen Master of Jesus College during the Commonwealth, but resigned after the Restoration in favour of Dr Richard Sterne, who had been ejected by the Puritan authorities. Sterne subsequently became Archbishop of York. After 1660 Worthington appears to have withdrawn from Cambridge, and exclusively devoted himself to the labours of a clergyman in a succession of livings—Horton, Fen Ditton, Ingoldsby (to which he was presented by More, in whose gift it was), and finally Hackney, of which church he was chosen lecturer in 1670. He was a diligent correspondent not only with his Cambridge friends, but with Mr Samuel Hartlib, whom some of our readers may remember in connection with Milton. Hartlib, like Evelyn—Jeremy Taylor's friend—is a figure constantly flitting through the theological and literary society of the seventeenth century. He was a writer and great authority on agriculture, as Evelyn was on gardening and forestry. Deeply interested in the philosophical and religious questions of the time, and

an ardent educational reformer—which is his point of connection with Milton—he was eager to learn all that was going on—the new books appearing, or the new speculations afloat. Worthington's correspondence with him is, of course, chiefly on religious subjects, but the letters are full of literary and social as well as theological gossip. More is frequently mentioned with great respect, and his 'Mystery of Godliness' spoken of as a book the like of which "hath not yet appeared in the world." The appearance of Glanvill's 'Vanity of Dogmatising' is signalised in May 1661, and the author spoken of as a young man of much reading and promise, "abating some juvenile heat." "As one said of the parts of pregnant young men, *We may guess what the wine will be*, and it will taste better when broached some years hence." It may be doubted in this case whether the new wine was not better than the more mature.

Worthington's own writings do not possess much substance. The volume of Discourses is the more readable of the two, and the style occasionally rises to dignity and a quaint plaintive eloquence, studded with many a golden sentence from the favourite Neo-Platonic mint. Speaking of the necessity of inward purity in order to see God,—now, he says, it is when the soul has set itself in good earnest on the task of self-purification "that the locks of Samson grow again, and the strength which went away and was gone, by its yielding to the blandishments and softnesses of the sensual and animal life—that most dangerous and inveigling Delilah—is returned. Now it is that the 'wings of the soul grow again, and

better;'[1] it moves more freely, being delivered from what did hitherto clog and stay its heavenly flight, its 'journey upwards,'[2] to use the expression of Hierocles. And as it prospers in its sincere and earnest endeavours to purge and cleanse itself from all that within which is contrary to God, by the same degrees and proportions 'it revives,' and becomes more lively, active, and vivacious. 'It is collected within itself, and is filled with divine strength and power, and unites itself to the fountain of intellectual purity and perfection.'"[3]

Such a passage—and there are many such—reminds us strongly of Smith. It is everywhere the well-accustomed speech, rich in spiritual aim, but darkened by Neo-Platonic, or Cabalistic, or apocalyptic allusion, that addresses us both in the 'Discourses' and in the 'Miscellanies,' which, however, bear a nearer resemblance to some of More's speculations. It must be allowed, at the same time, that there is a distinct vein of manner, if not of thought, in Worthington—a vein of practical earnestness, tenderness, and spiritual vivacity, which gives the impression, which we also gather from his life, that his natural sphere of labour was the pulpit, and that he must have excelled as a preacher. His successive promotions, and his appointment as lecturer at Hackney, indicate this. We are told, in fact, by his son, who originally edited his 'Discourses,' and characterises them as the "substance of sundry parcels of sermons," that he was very successful in his

[1] *Πτεροφυΐα ἀρίστη.*
[2] *Πρὸς τὴν ἄνω πορείαν.*
[3] Worthington's Discourses, p. 486.

ministry. "He had great cause to be thankful to God for the fruit of his labours, some of very different persuasions, and that had wandered through all forms, placing the kingdom of God in opinions and extra-essentials, being by his practical teaching awakened to other thoughts, and receiving settlement in better things, as they themselves acknowledged, and he heard also from others."[1] Tillotson, who preached his funeral sermon, gives the same impression. The "character" briefly drawn by the archbishop is not very descriptive, but a few touches may be given from it. It considers Worthington "chiefly in his profession, in his accomplishment for it, and his public usefulness in it. He had, by the great industry and power of his whole life, and God's blessing upon them, furnished himself with a great stock of all excellent learning proper to his profession, especially with that which did more immediately conduce to the knowledge of the Holy Scriptures—the best and most proper skill of a divine. Thus he was peculiarly fitted to teach and instruct others; and that the doctrine might be the more effectual, he showed himself in all things a follower of good works, and taught others nothing but what he had first learned himself. His whole demeanour was pious and grave, and yet not blemished with any moroseness or fond affectation. . . . He was universally inoffensive, kind, and obliging even to those that differed from him. . . . Especially in debates and controversies of religion he was not apt to be passionate and contentious, remembering that 'the wrath of man worketh not the right-

[1] Preface to Discourses.

eousness of God.' . . . But that which was most singularly eminent in him was the publicness of his spirit, and his great zeal and industry to be useful, especially in those things which tended to the promoting of piety and learning." His edition of the works of Joseph Mede, the famous expositor of the Apocalypse,[1] is specially mentioned as an instance of his industry. The edition cost him "infinite pains for several years together." It would be difficult to find "so vast a work that was ever published with more exactness."

Worthington married a niece of Whichcote,[2] so that he was connected not only by mental but by personal ties with the Platonic brotherhood. His letters and diary reveal the intimacy of this connection in numberless ways. If somewhat disap-

[1] The works of the pious and profoundly-learned Mr Joseph Mede, B.D., sometime Fellow of Christ College, Cambridge, in five books, folio. Mede died in 1638, before the rise of the Platonic school; but there is considerable affinity between certain trains of their thought—not the best or most rational—and his speculations.

[2] In a former page—93, vol. ii.—we have said that we had been unable to learn anything of Whichcote's marriage. An interesting letter which has reached us from Massachusetts, from the Rev. Henry A. Miles, D.D., in reference to the appearance of the chapter on Whichcote in the 'Contemporary Review' (October 1871), gives the information that Whichcote's wife was "the widow of Matthew Cradock, a wealthy London merchant," and the "first governor of the Company of Massachusetts Bay." In 1650 Mrs Whichcote petitioned the general court of Massachusetts for the payment of a sum of money alleged to be due to her former husband; and, later, the court voted that in consideration of the great disbursements of Mr Cradock in planting the colony, "one thousand acres of land be given to Dr Whichcote and his wife Rebecca." We have to thank our correspondent for this information, which it has been pleasant to receive from an American student and admirer of Whichcote's 'Aphorisms.'

pointing, they are yet full of curious information, and open up familiar glimpses into the domestic as well as academic life of the seventeenth century. There are love-letters, and scraps of poetry, and pathetic details of family suffering, and criticisms of new books and public events. Writing to Mrs Mary Whichcote at her father's house at Frogmore on the eve of his marriage in September 1657, he expresess himself with all the ardour of an impatient lover: "It is now a week since I left Frogmore, which upon other occasions is accounted no long time; but to me it is a week many times told. For the present I place myself in the constant remembrance of your loves and sweetnesses, and all these your lovely and endearing perfections both of body and mind, disposition and deportment, not forgetting your music. And I shall hasten to prepare for that happy time of enjoying your ever-desired company and the crowning of our affections—for love affects not delays." And nothing can be more pleasing and prettily becoming than the lady's reply. "Your welcome lines are come to hand, than which nothing but yourself could have been more welcome to me, in which you have expressed a great deal of love to me, and that far above my deserving. I cannot but acknowledge the moving of my heart to you—that of all the men that ever I saw, if I were to chuse of ten thousand, my heart would not close with any as with yourself,—you having such knowledge, goodness, and a lovely disposition, which you have manifested to me, and suitableness of temper, and in my eye no person so desirable. Love covereth a multitude of faults; and

I am persuaded that your love and wisdome will cover my weaknesses."[1]

But we cannot pause over such details. George Rust, the next in our group, appears far less prominently in connection with the movement than Worthington, although he attained a more prominent ecclesiastical position. He is the eloquent although somewhat inflated and artificial panegyrist of Jeremy Taylor, and—our readers may remember—is strongly recommended by Cudworth to Cromwell's Secretary of State, John Thurloe, as "an understanding, pious, discreet man, of exceeding good parts and a general scholar," but who seemed unwilling to divert himself from preaching and divinity to any civil service.[2] This was probably in 1657,[3] and at this time Rust was a Fellow of Christ's College, where he been educated. After the Restoration he went to Ireland at Taylor's solicitation, and was first of all appointed Dean of Connor, and then, on Taylor's death in 1667, he succeeded him as Bishop of Dromore, which was divided from Down and Connor, and constituted into a separate bishopric. He sur-

[1] Diary and Correspondence, i. 86-88. Worthington subscribes himself to his "dearest lady," "Madam—your servant;" and she responds, "Honoured sir—your servant." He seems to have composed a "Pastoral Epithalamium" on the occasion of his marriage, in which euphonious names and "shepherds and shepherdesses" make the usual figure. We give the four opening lines:—

"Come, come, fair nymphs, your garlands bring,
Strew all the ground with flowers;
Come, gentle shepherds, leave your flocks,
Retire into these bowers."

[2] See page 208 of this volume.

[3] Cudworth's letter is undated, as printed by Birch.

vived his promotion only three years, having caught a fever which cut him off in the end of 1670.

Rust is chiefly known and connected with our subject as the author of a 'Discourse of Truth,' given to the world in 1682, under the editorship of Glanvill, who speaks of him in the highest terms as "a man of a clear mind, a deep judgment, and a searching wit, greatly learned in all the best sorts of knowledge, old and new, a thoughtful and diligent inquirer, of a free understanding and vast capacity, joined with singular modesty and unusual sweetness of temper, which made him the darling of all that knew him. . . . He was one of the first in the University (Cambridge) who overcame the prejudices of the education of the times, and was very instrumental to enlarge others. He had too great a soul for the trifles of that age, and saw early the nakedness of phrases and fancies. He outgrew the pretended orthodoxy of those days, and addicted himself to the primitive learning and theology, in which he became a great master."[1]

The 'Discourse of Truth,' and sermon on the death of Taylor, hardly bear out these encomiums of Glanvill. There is a lack of life, freshness, and strength of thought in both. The Discourse has an air of elaboration in the sections into which it was probably divided by the editor. It is also, upon the whole, clearly and well written. But it has no substance or originality of argument. It is like reading Cudworth over in a minor and diluted form.

[1] Letter concerning the subject and author prefixed to 'Discourse of Truth,' 1682.

It overdoes altogether the argument in opposition to the idea of the Divine as a mere arbitrary Will. "Can Infinite Wisdom itself make the damning of all the innocent and the unspotted angels in heaven a proportionate means to declare and manifest the unmeasureableness of His grace, and love, and goodness towards them? Can lying, swearing, envy, malice, nay hatred of God and goodness itself, be made the most acceptable service of God, and the readiest way to a man's happiness?" For all these consequences seem to the author to follow from the denial that there are things, or, in his own language, "mutual respects and relations of things," irrespective of the Divine Will.[1] "If the nature of God be such that His arbitrarious imagination, that such and such things have such and such natures and dependencies, doth make these things to have those natures and dependencies, then He may as easily unimagine that imagination. . . . Contradictions are true if God will understand them so, and then the foundation of all knowledge is taken away."[2] . . . If Will *as such* be the only principle of the Divine actions, then changeableness rather than unchangeableness must be a perfection of the Divine nature. "For it is the nature of an arbitrarious principle to act or not, to do or undo upon no account but its own will or pleasure."[3]

There is much of the same sort of reasoning, but little advance of thought—a thoroughly rational and enlightened spirit and intention, but no largeness of grasp or comprehension. Truth is described as

[1] Discourse, sect. iv. [2] Ibid., v. [3] Ibid., vi.

twofold: Truth in things or in the object, and Truth in the understanding or the subject. The first order of Truth is nothing else than those "necessary mutual respects and relations of things," to the proof and illustration, or rather repeated affirmation, of which, the Discourse is almost entirely devoted. It comes after all to this, that things "necessarily are what they are, *ex natura* not *ex voluntate*." *Stat pro ratione voluntas* is the height of all falsehood. And the truth of things being thus immutable, truth in us is nothing but the conformity of our ideas with the immutable reality of things. "All truth that is in any created being is by participation and derivation from the first understanding and fountain of intellectual light. And that truth in the power of faculty is nothing but the conformity of its conception or ideas with the natures and relations of things, is clear and evident in itself, and necessarily follows from what hath been formerly proved concerning the truth of things in themselves, antecedently to any *understanding* or *will*, for things are what they are, and cannot be otherwise without a contradiction, and their mutual respects and dependencies eternal and unchangeable; so that the conceptions and ideas of these natures and their relations can only be so far true as they conform and agree with the things themselves, and the harmony which they have to one another."[1] This is the clear voice of the Platonic School, and Rust seems thoroughly to have imbibed its spirit and influence. He appears also to have been an earnest, thoughtful man, deeply in-

[1] Ibid., concluding sect. xviii.

terested in the progress of truth and an enlightened Christian philosophy. But there is no such significance in his character or his brief writings as to claim for him more prominence in our pages. The Discourse from which we have quoted is only about thirty pages, and seems to have been an enlarged University sermon.

Of Fowler, who became Bishop of Gloucester (1691), and Patrick, who was successively Bishop of Chichester and of Ely after the Revolution, we have already spoken, in connection with the contemporary estimates formed of our School, and the controversies which it called forth.[1] Both names are associated with the defence of the "Latitude-men," or "Latitudinarians," as the Cambridge divines were then called. Fowler's authorship of the 'Free Discourse' (1670), in which the principles and practices of these divines are discussed, is beyond question; but whether Simon Patrick was the S. P. who describes the "New Sect," and gives a "brief account" of "the New Philosophy" in a letter to a friend at Oxford (1662), remains doubtful. Both, however, were undoubted offshoots of the School. Patrick was trained at Cambridge throughout, and took his degree of M.A. in 1651, at the very time at which Whichcote's influence was rising to its height. Fowler was only partially educated at Cambridge, but he also took his Master's degree there as a member of Trinity College about 1655. His father appears to have been a Presbyterian minister, or at least was ejected for nonconformity after the Resto-

[1] See pages 34-44 of this volume.

ration; but the son did not inherit any of the father's scruples, and attracting the favourable notice of Sheldon, he gradually rose from one important position to another, till he attained the see of Gloucester. He is mainly known by a treatise on 'The Design of Christianity,'[1] which followed his 'Free Discourse' in little more than a year, and was intended as a sequel to the defence of the Cambridge doctrines which he had adventured in the preceding volume. John Bunyan attacked this book with great vigour. It appeared to him, in its advocacy of a moral Christianity, to upset the cardinal doctrine of Justification by Faith in Jesus Christ as the only source of "Gospel holiness;" and he issued from his prison at Bedford a violent polemic against it. The teaching was such, he said, as gave "just offence to Christian ears," and the author himself was "a pretended minister of the Word," who had "vilely exposed to public view the rottenness of his heart on principles diametrically opposite to the simplicity of the Gospel of Christ."[2] Fowler unhappily had not the forbearance to receive Bunyan's abuse with silence or contempt. He replied in a pamphlet entitled 'Dirt wiped out: or a manifest discovery of the gross ignorance, erroneousness, and most unchristian and wicked spirit of one John Bunyan, lay

[1] The full title of this treatise is, 'The Design of Christianity: or a plain demonstration and improvement of this proposition, viz., that the enduing men with inward real righteousness and true holiness was the ultimate end of our Saviour's coming into the world, and is the great intendment of His blessed Gospel:' 1671.

[2] 'Defence of the Doctrine of Justification:' 1672.

preacher at Bedford.' The contents of the pamphlet were only too suitable to the title. He designated the author of the 'Pilgrim's Progress' as "a wretched scribbler, a most foul-mouthed calumniator," "so very dirty a creature that he disdains to dirty his fingers with him."

This slight glimpse of Fowler's controversial art is enough to show, that whatever he had learned at Cambridge in intercourse with the 'Moderate' divines there whom he admired and defended, he had also learned in other schools. He was, in fact, much more of a pamphleteer and a politician than a thinker of any sort. He had but slight hold of the principles of the Cambridge theology, and has sketched them, as we have already remarked, from a superficial and somewhat confused point of view. In any case, his main activity, like that of Patrick, belongs to the period of the Revolution. He followed our Thinkers; he was no doubt greatly influenced by them, and imbibed some of their characteristic, although by no means their most profound and inward, principles; he defended them heartily and manfully, if with an inadequate appreciation; but he does not, after all, belong to them. His intellectual temper is too slight, and his personal ambition too prominent. The type of latitude characteristic of the Revolution, and which Fowler more distinctly represents, was different from that of the Platonic School. By this time the higher philosophical inspiration of the movement had spent itself. It had become practical, political, and ambitious. This further aspect of the general impulse of rational

thought has also its heroes, one of them, at least—Tillotson—of high wisdom and noble character; but it is beyond our present scope.

For the same reason we do little more than allude to Patrick, whose personal and theological significance might otherwise have claimed an extended notice. A friend and *protégé* of Whichcote and Cudworth, the contemporary and admirer of Henry More, and confidential pupil of John Smith[1]—Patrick had not only such close personal associations with the Platonic School, but he imbibed, at least in a profounder sense than Fowler, its characteristic spirit. There is in some of his writings a vein of tender mysticism, and in others a grave spiritual earnestness, which show that he had not merely caught up its tone, but had been inwardly touched by its contemplative enthusiasm. Yet even Patrick's mysticism is practical rather than ideal: the sentiment of the preacher rather than of the thinker. There is little in all his writings to remind us of the deeper speculations of Cudworth or of More. He is preacher, controversialist, Scriptural expositor, and bishop, but in no respect, philosopher. He has carried away the air of the Cambridge divinity; it breathes through his practical writings and sermons; but he has done nothing to advance its thought or enrich its fruitfulness. His liberality, like that of Fowler, is the more commonplace and worldly liberality of the Revolution period, which adopted and applied the Cambridge principles, rather than intellectually lived in them. And there is in both—even in Patrick, with his richer

[1] Preface to Patrick's writings: Oxford ed., 1858.

culture and genuine spirituality—a capacity of polemical coarseness, which is foreign to the Platonic temper, and separates them from the genuine spirit of the movement. It was difficult for theologians who engaged in public life after the Restoration to avoid polemical violence; but it is the special glory of the school of thought, in both its phases, which we have aimed to sketch in these volumes, that not one of its writers ever soiled their pens by vituperative abuse, or that species of advocacy which insinuates evil motives in an opponent, instead of replying to his arguments. It is highly noteworthy to what extent moderation of dogmatic opinion, and breadth of philosophical and theological insight, have been in all Christian history associated with moderation of Christian temper and the courtesies of controversy; while extreme dogmatists of every school, in the very rashness of their confidence, have too often disgraced their cause by unchristian harshness. There are instances, no doubt, in which "moderate" opinions have been defended without moderation; but such instances—as in the examples of Fowler and Patrick—will almost invariably be found in those who have adopted moderation as a side, rather than worked it out for themselves as a principle; who, in short, follow in the wake, rather than add to the rank of rational thinkers.[1]

[1] This may be said of Stillingfleet, who is the only one in our list of theologians to whom the complimentary statement of the text can be held to apply with any qualification. He is only partially a member of the rational brotherhood, and it is not in connection with it, or advocacy of any of its principles, that he makes use of harsh controversial weapons.

Bishop Wilkins is mentioned by Burnet along with our Cambridge divines, in his well-known description quoted in the opening chapter of this volume. Burnet's statement is, that Wilkins "joined at Cambridge with those who studied to propagate better thoughts, to take men off from being in parties, or from narrow notions, from superstitious conceits, and fierceness about opinions." This is true. To great gifts and a most varied intellectual activity, Wilkins united a moderate temper, and was a strong advocate for comprehension after the Restoration. But he cannot, in any true sense, be called a member, or even an adherent, of the Cambridge School. Almost all his academic connection is with Oxford, where he was educated, and where he was Warden of Wadham College during all the period, from 1647 to 1667, that the Cambridge theologians were in their highest activity. He was a Calvinist, moreover, of a somewhat strict type, and allied to the dominant party during the same period far more closely than any of our theologians can be said to be. Wilkins was "an excellent mathematician," and "a great observer and promoter of experimental philosophy;" but he had comparatively little genius for religious speculation, and none of the Platonic enthusiasm which is the special note of our confederation of writers.[1]

[1] Many of Wilkins's physical speculations seem to have been of a really original kind—such as his speculations as to the planetary system, the habitable character of the moon, and his 'Mercury: or the Secret and Swift Messenger, showing how a man may, with privacy and speed, communicate his thoughts to a friend at a distance:' 1641. He was also the author of a remarkable 'Essay

There are still two other names which must be mentioned. One has already crossed us frequently, while the other carries forward to another age the impulse of Platonic idealism. We mean Joseph Glanvill and John Norris. Both men were Oxford students, and much younger—Norris greatly younger—than any of the Cambridge divines, but they were alike fascinated by the character and speculations of More, and warm admirers of his genius. In More's later years, Glanvill seems almost to have been his special friend. They encouraged each other in their spiritualistic delusions; and after Glanvill's death in 1680, at the early age of forty-four, his work on witchcraft was reissued, with large additions by More, under the title by which it is generally known, 'of Sadducismus Triumphatus.' Norris again opened a correspondence[1] with the venerable Platonist in his closing years, and nourished his fresh Platonic fire at the dying embers of a genius which had so long dwelt on its transcendental heights.

Glanvill's early promise was very unlike his later defence of witchcraft; yet there is an intelligible consistency, from his own point of view, in all the stages of his development. His work on 'The Vanity of Dogmatising' first appeared in 1661, when he was only twenty-five years of age. Worthington

toward a real character and a philosophical language.' He was married to Cromwell's sister, and enjoyed certain advantages from this connection during the Commonwealth.

[1] This correspondence is very curious and interesting. It is found annexed to one of Norris's earliest books—'The Theory and Regulation of Love; a Moral Essay, in two parts: to which are added, Letters Philosophical and Moral between the Author and Dr Henry More.' Oxford: 1688.

saw in it the traces of juvenile "heat," but augured, we have seen, higher things of the author when the wine of his genius had fully ripened. His genius never reached anything higher, except in the late edition of the same work (1665), which was considerably altered and more carefully elaborated under the special title of 'Scepsis Scientifica.' The special object of this work, as its name implies, is to prove the vanity of dogmatism, or "confidence in opinions," from the uncertainty attaching to all our sources of knowledge. It runs over with a rapid, fluent, and occasionally brilliant pen, the various instances of our ignorance, as to the nature of soul and of body, their union and mode of action. It discourses of the fallacies of the senses and the imagination, the errors "imaged" in us by the force of affection, custom, and education, and especially "antiquity and authority." It devotes five considerable chapters to the "Aristotelian Philosophy," with the view of showing its ineptness for the modern inquirer, and the injurious bondage which it has exercised over the human mind. And finally, it closes with a spirited representation of all the evils of dogmatism as the fruit of "untamed passions" and "an ungoverned spirit," a "disturber of the world," and a source of "ill manners, immodesty, and narrowness of mind."

This work has been greatly admired and commended both by Hallam and Mr Lecky.[1] It deserves

[1] Hallam's Hist. of Lit., iv. 119, 122—6th ed. Lecky's Hist. of the Use and Influence of the Spirit of Rationalism, i. 121, 125. Both writers also speak of the scarcity of the book, especially

a great deal of the commendation bestowed upon it. It has "the felicity," upon which the author himself set so much value, "of clear and distinct thinking;" it is fluent, and here and there brilliant, both in sentiment and expression; especially it is lively and readable throughout, and many of its happy and pregnant sentences remain in the memory. Withal it is marked by little originality or depth of thought. Its intellectual life runs thinly, with all its vivacity and rhetorical glitter. It is deficient in arrangement —a common fault of the period, but more noticeable in this case from the brevity of the work, which even in its later form is little more than a pamphlet, of less than two hundred widely-printed pages! It is, in short, an amazingly clever book, which gathered up and applied to Philosophy as well as Theology the advancing tendencies of the time. But there is little evidence that Glanvill had worked out for himself the new spirit which he applies so aptly, or that his clever criticism comes forth from any fulness of rational light in his own mind. Many of his best sayings against contentiousness and dogmatism in religion, and the ridiculous value attached to authority and antiquity, are but echoes of what Hales had said before—although he may not have been indebted to the 'Golden Remains,' published only two years before his own book. He certainly makes no allusion to it. His personal

of the second edition of 1665. "A remarkable work," says Hallam, "but one so scarce as to be hardly known at all." But so far as our experience goes, the book is by no means unknown in both editions.

allusions are confined to the great philosophic names of the period,—Descartes, Hobbes, More, and along with these philosophic notabilities, Sir Kenelm Digby, whose portrait, as drawn by Clarendon, we formerly quoted.[1] Digby, after his retirement to Paris, became a philosopher, and published there, in 1644, two elaborate treatises: one on 'Bodies,' and another 'On Man's Soul.' He and his theories attracted some renewed attention at the Restoration. The Digbœan hypothesis as to the genesis of Memory is enumerated by Glanvill in conjunction with the Aristotelian, Cartesian, and Hobbian, and receives an equal share of attention. Nothing comes amiss to his flowing, easy pen; great and small are touched happily, but lightly and superficially. This is the general character of the work. It is a rapid, facile, striking, and eloquent criticism from the hand of a student, with the boldness and dash, but also with something of the rawness, characteristic of juvenile effort.

The following are a few specimens of its happy manner:—

"We reverence grey-headed doctrines, though

[1] Vol. i. p. 106-108. We do not profess to have studied Sir K. Digby's treatises, but we have looked into them. They are not very readable: yet they show more solid labour, and even subtlety of disquisition, than we could have supposed possible from the versatile and restless character attributed to him. See vol. i. p. 106-108. Digby lived, as implied in the text, to return to England at the Restoration, and delivered at Gresham College, in the beginning of 1660, "A Discourse concerning the Vegetation of Plants." This, with another brief essay on "the Powder of Sympathy," is bound up with the two treatises referred to in the text. Another brief tract of his, "Conference with a Lady upon Choice of Religion," attracted some attention.

feeble, decrepit, and within a step of dust. . . . The beauty of a truth, as of a picture, is not acknowledged but at a distance."—Scepsis Scientifica, p. 102.

In allusion to Aristotle, he says: "If we owe it to him that we know so much, 'tis perhaps lazy of his fond adorers that we know so little more. I can see no ground why his reason should be textuary to ours; or that God or nature ever intended him an universal *headship*. 'Twas this vain idolising of authors which gave birth to that silly vanity of *impertinent citations*, and inducing authority in things neither requiring nor deserving it. . . . 'Tis an inglorious acquist to have our heads or volumes laden, as were Cardinal Campeius his mules with old and useless luggage. And yet the magnificence of many high pretenders to science, if laid open by a true discovery, would amount to no more than the old boots and shoes of that proud and exposed ambassador. . . . Authorities alone with me make no *number*, unless evidence of reason stand before them."—P. 105, 106.

"'Tis no good fishing for verity in troubled waters."—P. 122.

"Opinions are the rattles of immature intellects. . . . True knowledge is modest and wary; 'tis ignorance that is bold and presuming. . . . They that never peeped beyond the common belief in which their easie understandings were first indoctrinated, are strongly assured of the truth and comparative excellency of their receptions; while the larger souls that have travelled the divers *climates*

of opinions are more cautious in their resolves, and more sparing to determine."—P. 167.

"The union of a sect within itself is a pitiful charity: it's no concord of Christians but a conspiracy against Christ; and they that love one another for their *opinionative concurrences*, love for their own sakes and not their Lord's,—not because they have His image, but because they bear one anothers."—P. 169.

None of Glanvill's subsequent writings equal this early essay. They are without its brilliancy, and they have not acquired, in compensation, depth or solidity. They have nearly all, moreover, lost in rationality. His 'Lux Orientalis' is nothing but a lighter and weaker reproduction of More's dreams about the pre-existence of souls; and his 'Sadducismus Triumphatus,' which has already more than once come in our way, is one of the most singular compounds of philosophy and credulity in the world. Mr Lecky has said of this book, that it "is probably the ablest ever published" in defence of witchcraft. The statement astonishes us; for, with the exception of some ingenious argument in the first part,[1] on the possibility of spiritual existences under the form of witches and apparitions, and the chapters on the notion of spirit translated from

[1] The first part seems originally to have been the whole book: the sixth edition of this smaller volume, corrected and enlarged, under the name of 'A Blow at Modern Sadducism,' lies before us, bearing the date 1668. It was not till after Glanvill's death that the book was published in its enlarged form, under the title of 'Sadducismus Triumphatus,' in 1681, and More's additions were not added till the following year.

More's 'Metaphysics,' the book is nothing but a collection of ghost-stories, or supposed manifestations of demons, some of them of a singularly silly and uninteresting description. The excitement caused by certain disturbances in a house at Tedworth, seems quite to have upset More and Glanvill's mind, and both devoted themselves to the collection of instances corroborative of the agency of demons and the devil. The controversy became general and exciting. Dr Meric Casaubon, the Dean of Canterbury, joined in it. Glanvill plainly believed the whole question of the supernatural to be at stake, and laboured zealously for the cause as for the life of religion. All the while he was plunged in a controversy on behalf of the New Royal Society, and the right of free scientific inquiry. His 'Plus Ultra; or the Progress and Advancement of Knowledge since the Days of Aristotle,' was a vigorous defence of the spirit of physical research everywhere spreading in opposition to scholasticism.

Nothing can be more singular than this combination of credulity and love of free inquiry in Glanvill. It is not merely, as in Cudworth or others, the fact of the belief in Witchcraft lying alongside other traditionary beliefs, in a mind otherwise of great power and rationality. This is perfectly conceivable. But it is the case of an acute, lively intellect, whose whole natural activity seems developed in the defence of scepticism, embracing equally the defence of witchcraft, with a sort of fanaticism. He makes the same vigorous and intrepid fight for witches and for the Royal Society; and to crown the curious combina-

tion, he draws a picture of "Anti-Fanatical Religion and Free Philosophy," in which he no less pointedly attacks the various "fanatical" sectaries, and defends, very much in the spirit of Fowler, the moderate Theology.

This latter writing, which appeared in a volume of "Essays on several Important Subjects in Philosophy and Religion" in 1676, brings him once more into direct contact with our School. It was designed, in continuation of Bacon's 'New Atlantis,' to give a narrative of a visit to an "angelical" country under the name of Bensalem, and to describe the happy state of religion there. Under this thin guise Glanvill depicts the character of the Rational divines whom he admired and with whom he associated. "They thought it not enough to read a few systems to understand the correct orthodoxy of the times, or to gain the faculty of speaking to the people in the taking tone and phrase. But they read the histories of the Church and the Fathers of the first three centuries. In them they looked for the doctrine and practice that were in the beginning, and considered that religion was most pure in those primitive times. . . . They inquired into the reasonableness of the great principles of religion, and provided themselves thereby to deal with atheists, infidels, and enthusiasts. . . . They asserted liberty of judgment, but bounded it with so much caution, that no prejudice could arise to legal establishments. They knew that truth would have the advantage, could it but procure an impartial trial. . . . They considered often, and filled their thoughts with a great sense of the

narrowness of human capacity, and the imperfections of our largest knowledge. . . . They were not so fond of their own opinions as to think them necessary for all others; nor were they infected with the common zeal to spread and propagate every truth they thought they knew. Their main design was to make men good, not notional and knowing. . . . *They studied in the places where some of the chief of the (Puritan) sects governed and preached publicly. This they scrupled not, because they were young, and had been under no explicit engagements to those laws that were then unhappily overruled. In those and other University exercises, they much saved the interest of the Church of Bensalem by undermining the Ataxites (for so the sectaries were called).* . . . In order to cure the madness of the age, they were zealous to make men sensible that Reason is a branch and beam of the Divine Wisdom—that light which God hath put into our minds, and that law which He hath writ upon our hearts; that faith itself is an act of reason, and built upon the two reasonable principles, *that there is a God*, and that *what He saith is true*. . . . According to such principles they managed their discourses."[1]

It is needless to enlarge extracts. They might be indefinitely multiplied in many significant touches to the same effect. Nothing can be more transparent than Glanvill's aim to vindicate the rational position and character of the Platonic divines; and his vindication upon the whole is more effective, as

[1] Anti-Fanatical Religion and Free Philosophy (1676), p. 9, 12, 13, 16, 17.

it is more vivid, than that of Fowler, or the "Brief Account of the new Sect of Latitude Men by S.P." It fails like them in adequate criticism, and grasp of principles in their relation to one another; and it is deficient in order of thought, like all his books. But his lively and acute force of analysis, and varied felicity of expression, give an interesting and graphic picture, and bring the attitude of the School distinctly before us.[1]

Glanvill's peculiar position as a thinker, and his relation to the Cambridge School, on both sides of his mind—on the weaker credulous side no less than on the rational and sceptical side—naturally claimed so much notice. After Worthington and Rust, he is, Oxford man as he was, the most direct expression of the same spirit and mind as Cudworth and More, with the latter of whom he has, besides, so many per-

[1] Nothing, for example, can be more graphic than the following description of More's philosophical position. In Descartes they (the divines whom the author is describing) "found a prodigious wit, and clear thoughts, and a wonderfully ingenious fabric of philosophy, which they thought to be the neatest *mechanical* system of things that had appeared in the world. Yet some of them who thought highly of this mechanical wit, and believed that he had carried matter and motion as far as they would go, declared earnestly against the completeness and perfection of his hypotheses, and learnedly showed that the mechanical principles alone would not solve the phenomena. These judged that nothing could be done in physiology without admitting the Platonical λόγοι σπερματικοὶ and *spirit of Nature*, and so would have the mechanical principles aided by the vital.

"As to Moral Philosophy, they did by no means approve of the contentious disputing ethics that made it to be rather (as Cicero speaks) ostentatio Scientiæ than lex Vitæ. But they founded them upon the excellent knowledge of *human nature and passions*, . . . and formed their knowledge into solid rules of life."—Anti-Fanatical Religion and Free Philosophy (1676), p. 51.

sonal associations. Norris is also brought into direct connection with More. He conducted a correspondence with him, "philosophical and moral." But otherwise he stands aside, not indeed from our subject, but from our history. His philosophical activity only commences with the termination of the Cambridge movement. He carries it forward to another age, but he does not himself belong to it. Norris, indeed, stands by himself in the history of English philosophy, the solitary Platonist of the Revolution era, who handed on the torch of Idealism into the next century, till it was grasped by the vigorous and graceful hands of Berkeley. It may be difficult to trace any direct connection betwixt the author of the 'Principles of Human Knowledge' and the author of 'The Theory of the Ideal or Intelligible World.'[1] There may have been no indebtedness on the part of the Dublin idealist to the idealist of Bemerton. But the impulse of thought is the same; the line of Platonic speculation runs forward from the one to the other. Norris has comparatively passed out of sight; and Berkeley is a familiar name to every student of philosophy. But Norris, although a half-forgotten, is really a striking and significant figure in the history of English philosophy. He was an idealist of the purest type, sustained by the loftiest inspiration. His fine genius, exquisite spiritual sensibility, and tender exaltation

[1] Berkeley's 'Theory of Vision' was published in 1709, and his 'Principles of Human Knowledge' a year later, before Norris's death. The 'Theory of the Ideal or Intelligible World' was published, the first part in 1701, and the second part in 1704.

of character, well deserve a niche by itself in the temple of Idealism. Chronological limits exclude him from our series; but it is a happy chance which enables us to connect the last links of the Cambridge School[1] with a name so honoured, and a philosophy so elevated, as that of John Norris.

Some readers will perhaps miss, in the foregoing enumeration of Platonic writers in the seventeenth century, the name of Sir Thomas Browne, author of 'Religio Medici' and 'Christian Morals.' Browne undoubtedly belongs to the Platonic type of thought, and is highly deserving of criticism both as a thinker and writer. But he does not come into any contact with our series of writers, and we have not been able to find a place for him without diverging from the historical sequence which we have more or less sought to preserve in these sketches. As an author, he preceded considerably any of the Cambridge Platonists — the 'Religio Medici' having been published in 1643, and having been written, it is supposed, nearly ten years earlier.[2] He survived, it is true, the Restoration twenty-two years; and his mixed devotion to science and credulity, his love of a comprehensive and liberal Christianity, his quaint enthusiasm and love of pleasantry, his vivacious and garrulous mysticism, which peopled the world around him with spiritual agencies, and saw in it everywhere

[1] Norris may be said to be connected with Cudworth, as well as More, through Lady Masham, with whom he had a controversy as to the nature of divine love. —See present vol. p. 227.

[2] See Editor's Preface to Pickering's beautiful edition of 'Religio Medici' and 'Christian Morals,' 1845.

the "picture of the Invisible," closely ally him with such writers as More and Glanvill. Unconnected by any external bonds, he represents with them the same combination of inquiry and faith—the same yearning towards higher forms of truth, and the same love and fondness for the Past—the same eclecticism in thought—and must we not also say the same dreamy religious imaginativeness, more beautiful than strong, more picturesque and ideal than practically earnest, self-denying, and victorious?

VII.

GENERAL ESTIMATE—RELIGIOUS PHILOSOPHY.

It now only remains briefly to sum up the results of our historical and expository survey. These results have been plainly indicated already; but it may be well to bring them together, and so set in order the services which the rational movement of the seventeenth century has rendered to the cause of Christian thought and civilisation. Finally, we shall touch on the defects of the movement, and the causes of its partial failure.

I. The primary merit of our Rational Theologians was their inculcation of the doctrine of toleration. This doctrine is now so universally admitted in theory, that it is not easy to estimate the cost at which it was first taught, and the superior enlightenment out of which it arose in the seventeenth century. Yet no idea was at first more novel and repulsive. It was unintelligible to the ordinary political and theological mind.[1] It was intolerable to the powerful factions which strove for the mastery in England.

[1] Even after all the lessons of the civil war and the Commonwealth, a theologian so eminent as Dr Owen failed to appreciate in its true meaning the principle of toleration. — See Stoughton's Church of the Restoration, i. 30, 31.

Cromwell, when he attained to power, so far realised and carried out the idea; but this was in virtue of his own superiority, and his sympathy with the rational thought which otherwise he so little understood. But neither High Churchmen nor Puritans understood it—or, so far as they understood it, they hated it. Their essential conception, both of a national and ecclesiastical polity, implied dogmatic as well as external uniformity. In opposition to this, our Rational Theologians announced as *a principle* that dogmatic uniformity is unattainable, and that the prosperity both of the Church and the country are to be sought in toleration and latitude of religious opinion. They proclaimed in other words, that religious questions can only be settled by being left to free discussion. Men, inasmuch as their minds and circumstances are different, necessarily differ about them. They are matters of conscience and not of control. The very effort to control religious opinion not only defeats the end in view and issues in fiercer discordance than ever, but it kills religious vitality, and assails the personal foundations of all belief. The spiritual reason on the one hand, and Scripture on the other, are the sole authorities in religion. Man can have no higher arbiter in the end, of what is divine or credible in religion, than his own judgment enlightened by God's Word.

These statements are now of the nature of religious commonplace, worn and perhaps vulgarised by indiscriminate repetition. The doctrine of toleration—if not of the supremacy of reason in religion—is now a popular instead of a proscribed doctrine. And

even the most irrational religious organisations have learned to use the word, and profess to be shocked at any thought of enforcing their religious opinions upon others. But it is easy to be tolerant after the triumph of toleration. It is good to make a virtue of necessity, and to proclaim a principle the practice of which is more or less compulsory, according to modern State usages, on all religious bodies. This is something entirely different from the recognition of the principle in its true sense—in the sense in which our Divines recognised and taught it. Their idea of toleration was not mere non-interference with another's religious opinions, still less indifference as to the quality of such opinions, as if beyond rational cognisance. It was an intelligent apprehension of the right of each and all to search and find religious truth for themselves. It sprang out of deep reverence for conscience, and trust in the voice of reason as the supreme side of human nature. It was, according to them, the special function of the Church to educate, and not to bind and control, religious thought. The truly Catholic Church is not the Church resting in this creed or that, proclaiming this type of doctrine or that, but the universal company of the faithful, who own Christ as their Lord, and believe in His name, with all their diversities of opinion and of gift. The idea of the Church as based upon opinion is a mediæval and not a primitive idea. The Church subsists in communion of spirit, not in coincidence of doctrine. It has a common faith—it may have a common worship ; but it is not bound to any definite type of theology—any argumentative or theoretic creed.

The statement of facts in the Apostles' Creed is ample doctrinal basis, beyond which it is wrong to go.

Such was the conclusion to which the idea of toleration worked itself in the minds of our Rational Theologians. It seems the only logical conclusion. If the essence of the Church rests in doctrine rather than in life, in creeds rather than in sympathy, then it follows directly that toleration of religious differences is inconsistent with its true order and function. If salvation depends upon true opinion, then variety of opinion must be inconsistent with it, and of course expelled from the Church, and prevented with all practicable force. It is impossible to get out of this circle. Persecution is the legitimate corollary of the dogmatic idea of the Church. Toleration is only rationally held when differences of dogma are not only acknowledged, but, so to speak, cultivated as the very condition and nurture of spiritual activity. Uniformity of doctrine is not only impracticable; it is not a good thing in itself. It can only exist where thought and science are dead; where the cold shadow of the past lies upon the quick life of the present, and imprisons it, to the injury of Christian progress and civilisation.

Starting with the sacredness of religious conviction in the individual, and its divinely incompressible character, our Rational Divines did not yet any of them sink into individualism, or dream of a "dissidence of dissent." They felt the awful reality of the religious problem, and that religion was something beyond all State compulsion, but they did not therefore abandon the idea of a national Church.

They sought to modify the idea—not to subvert it. What is known as the "Voluntary principle" was then unknown, and would not have appeared to them a principle at all. No doubt modern Voluntaryism has sprung in some degree from their root-thought —the sacredness of religious conviction, and the absolute authority of conscience therein. But let men differ as they may in religious opinion—this was no reason, according to our divines, why there should not be common worship and a common national Church. Nay, community of religious life is all the more necessary because unity of religious opinion is impossible. They solved the religious problem, therefore, not by giving it up, and saying, Since men cannot agree about religion let them separate, and each party keep its own principles and set up its own worship—but by pushing the problem to its legitimate conclusion, and drawing out the essential distinction between dogma and religion.

This great distinction is one of their chief contributions to modern thought. Dogmatic opinion and religious faith belong with them to different spheres. The one is the product of the intellect, always restlessly seeking for exhaustive solutions of the Divine, as of everything else. The other is the fruit of the Spirit; the sympathetic life in man which clings to a higher life, even when light is wanting, and the sphere of divine knowledge may seem conflicting and obscure. The latter is the only true basis of the Church, whose function is first to quicken, and then strengthen and educate, the religious side of humanity, without primary respect to scientific accuracy of opinion. To make

opinion or dogma the basis of the Church is to invert the divine order, according to which doctrine is placed after life, and true thought as to the Divine can only spring from its practice and realisation. This is an idea repeatedly enforced by our Theologians. They recognise religion and the Church as springing from faith in a personal Redeemer, and finding in this faith their ample warrant. There is no other or further essential of Christian communion. Theological opinion or dogma is a growth from this. To attain to clearer and higher views of the divine Being and character, and the mode of the divine action in human salvation, is the work of the Christian intellect within the Church, nurtured by an ever nearer communion with its heavenly Source. But to bar the threshold by a summary of Christian Theology, which all must receive as the condition of entrance to it—nay, under the peril of damnation which it pronounces upon misbelievers—is not only to narrow and sectarianise the Catholic communion, but to subvert its essential idea. The Church is the home of the faithful everywhere—of all who have any aspirations after God and truth. Precise opinions in Theology are the labour of the schools—of the thought bred within the Church, awakened and nurtured by its special life.

The conception of dissent, therefore, had no place in the minds of our Theologians. The Church was not to them an organisation for the propagation of this or that set of opinions; it was a culture or worship resting on the recognition of a few divine facts—a spiritual society, within whose sheltering

bosom all opinions consistent with these facts should find free room and scope. It did not begin in dogma; it does not rightly rest on it; yet one of its functions is to elaborate dogma, and cultivate a higher Christian thought, as well as a more diffused and earnest Christian spirit. Thought is the function of the few; it can only live and flourish along with perfect freedom. Dogma is the varying expression of the divine activity of the Church in ever-renewed adaptation to its own necessities and the progress of knowledge. Instead of being the beginning, therefore, it is the summit and crown of the Church's being. Instead of resting upon a creed, in any purely dogmatic or scientific sense—in other words, upon a special Theology, which was the Puritan conception—the true idea of the Church is that it is continually in search of a higher Theology,—a more comprehensive and perfect co-ordination of the spiritual facts lying at its basis.[1]

In this view the Church is not a separate spiritual society either in the form of Prelacy or of Presbytery,

[1] There is a passage in Coleridge's 'Notes on Jeremy Taylor' (vol. i., Notes on English Divines, p. 229) which may be quoted in connection with the view here expressed: "Oh that this great and good man," he says, "who saw and has expressed so large a portion of the truth (if by the Creed I might understand the true Apostles', that is, the Baptismal Creed, free from the additions of the first five centuries—I might say, indeed, the whole truth), had but brought it back to the great original end and purpose of historical Christianity and of the Church visible, as its exponent, not as a *hortus siccus* of past revelations, but an ever-enlarging enclosed *area* of the opportunity of individual conversion to, and reception of, the truth! then, instead of using this one truth to inspire a despair of all truth, a reckless scepticism within, and a boundless compliance without, he would have directed the believer to seek for light where there was a certainty of finding it, so far as it was profitable to him—that is, so far as it actually was light for him. The

Calvinian, Arminian, or Socinian in its tenets. Such divisions are already sectarian in their very conception. It is the nation itself in the aggregation of its

visible Church would be a walled academy—a pleasure-garden, in which the entrants, having presented their *symbolum portæ*, or admission contract, walk at large, each seeking private audience of the invisible teacher,—alone now, now in groups, meditating or conversing—gladly listening to some elder disciple, through whom (as ascertained by his intelligibility to me) I feel that the common Master is speaking to me; or lovingly communing with a classfellow who, I have discovered, has received the same lesson from the inward teaching with myself, while the only public concerns in which all, as a common weal, exercised control and vigilance over each, are order, peace, mutual courtesy and reverence, kindness, charity, love, and the fealty and devotion of all and each to the common Master and Benefactor." A pleasing ideal of a true Church! somewhat marred by the analogy of an Academy rather than of a Home—for discipline, as well as instruction—and especially by the strange insinuation, which Coleridge repeats again and again, that there was some sceptical reserve in Taylor's advocacy of the Apostles' Creed as an ample doctrinal basis for the Church. It does not appear to us that there is the slightest evidence of this suspicion. The scruples which Coleridge had as to the existing form of the Creed were unknown to Taylor. All the drift of his argument on 'The Liberty of Prophesying' is quite as effective, or more effective, taking the Creed in its limited and original, rather than in its later traditionary sense. Taylor was quite as honest in dealing with it in the larger as Coleridge in the briefer form.

The idea of the Church on its educational side, however, is well and happily conceived by Coleridge. It is an idea, transcending alike sacerdotalism and dogmatism—both of which imply a Church already in full possession of Truth in its highest forms, rather than in any degree in search of it—the members of which have to receive and own well-known lessons, patent to all, rather than to inquire or look for higher light. The one is the mere maternal view of the Church, imposing her authority; the other is the rational view, which recognises her as a mother, but also as an organ of spiritual intelligence, rejecting no form of truth, but appropriating and purifying all. The spirit of truth has been working in the Church from the first, producing many precious fruits of Christian wisdom and knowledge, which every reverent mind will receive with grateful respect. But this spirit is as living now as ever; and a sacerdotalism which fixes the Divine in some definite ritual,

spiritual activities—its collective Christian life and wisdom working with freedom, yet subject to the common order and law. The true rule of the Church

however venerable, or a dogmatism which fixes it in a creed or symbol, however valuable, is equally fatal to those progressive manifestations, or higher harmonies of divine knowledge, whereby the future may yet throw light upon the past, and more fully justify the ways of God to men.

It must at the same time be admitted that dogmatism, and even sacerdotalism, have their place and function in the Christian Church. Both are real growths in the course of its historical development. They exist only because there is a side of Christian feeling and intelligence to which they answer. Evangelical zeal and the intensity of Christian enthusiasm, which inspire and sustain missionary enterprise in all Churches, naturally tend to dogmatism; while the deep sense of human weakness which comes from the presence of the Divine in sinful hearts, perhaps as naturally tends to some form of sacramentarianism or reliance on priestly rites. Unless scope is given for both these tendencies within a national Church, division or sectarianism must necessarily ensue. But why should not a Church embrace, within regulated or legal expansion, all these tendencies? Because they are intolerable to one another, or beyond the control of law? The Evangelical dogmatist will not suffer the sacerdotalist; and both detest and desire to expel the rationalist. Religion, in short, is not only beyond political compulsion—which all now admit—but incapable of legislative guidance or control,—the favourite view of our modern politicians. On such a view certainly the theory of a national Church cannot be maintained. But neither can the idea of the Church itself be maintained. It must break to pieces by the mere pressure of its diverse activities; and the very variety of those divine *charismata*, out of which it originally sprang, and which, in the course of its history, as at the beginning, constitute the presence of the Divine Spirit in it, involve its disintegration and dissolution. If the religious element, in short, be in its nature irrepressible —and religious men on different sides will have *all their own way* or nothing—then the Church in any catholic or national sense will become impracticable. But so also will religion cease to be a factor in modern civilisation, and Christianity in all lands dwindle into a mere congeries of religious parties—"the dismal spectacle," as H. More says, "of an infinity of sects and schisms" (see vol. ii. p. 336). Public life will be separated from religion altogether, and the game of politics become a wild chase of ambition, without even the pretence of respect for moral or religious sanc-

is, therefore, neither with bishop nor with presbyter, with ecclesiastical council nor royal will, but with the supreme national voice. This is the only consistent deduction from the views of our Divines. It was the practical creed of some of them, if not of all. Their theory of a comprehensive Church, in short, embracing, as it did, every form of Christian activity, and giving free play to every variety of Christian opinion, had no final element of control except the collective national will. It may be called the constitutional theory, in opposition to the sacerdotal and dogmatical; or the theory of the balance of spiritual forces, in contrast to that of mere autocratic will on the one hand, or dogmatic compulsion on the other. Of the former, the Papacy is the only pure and logical form; of the latter, Protestant Dissent, in its various manifestations, is the legitimate conclusion. The one exists to carry out the will of the Divine, as expressed by a single absolute voice, into which all the intellectual activities of the Church gather; and every lower form of the sacerdotal theory tends to culminate in this species of autocratic supremacy: the other exists to propagate its own notions of Christian truth as necessarily the truth, and by the pressure of its special dogmatisms to crush all further spirit of Christian inquiry, and, within its own pale, or as far as it can, all freedom of thought.

Whatever may be thought of the Latitudinarian or constitutional theory, it is at least the only theory of

tion, while Christian sects look calmly on from their sanctified enclosures! Can we not already point to instances of such a result?

the Church which has been found consistent with Christian science, and the cultivation of intellectual fairness no less than spiritual piety and charity. Not only so, but it is the only theory not discredited by the course of civilisation. A national Church which can embrace all the varied activities of Christian thought and life—which can appropriate instead of repelling the results of scientific discovery, and modify instead of banning even the froward energies of communistic thought—is a possibility in the future. The wildest powers of our modern scientific and social life may be brought within its control and purification. Before such powers Popery and Separatism are alike helpless. Systems which have nothing to learn—which have long ago laid up and embalmed, as splendid antiquarianism, their theories of the Divine—have nothing to teach. The most living and powerful thought of the age passes them by without notice. Mediævalism broods as a spectre on the face of modern civilisation. Sectarianism faintly solicits its mind and heart. Neither really move and vitalise it, while it goes onward its unknown way.

(2.) If our Rational Theologians differed in their theory of the Church both from the Prelatists and Puritans, they no less differed in their theory of religion. The one difference, indeed, implies the other. With both these parties religion was more or less something distinct from humanity—a celestial truth in the keeping of bishops or of presbyters of the "Church," or of a Westminster Assembly. The Cambridge Divines did not, of course, deny that there was a distinct spiritual truth revealed in Scripture;

on the contrary, they were the great defenders of the reality of religion in the reaction of unbelief that followed the dogmatic excesses of the time. They were Christian Apologists as well as Christian Rationalists, and their true position can only be understood when viewed in both aspects. On the one side they testified to the need of reason and faith, of morality and religion; on the other side they testified—and none have ever done it more nobly—that reason needs faith, and morality religion. This double attitude is of the highest significance. Religion, they said, is not a set of forms or magical round of rites; neither is it a set of notions or elaborate round of doctrines. It is a life—a higher, purer, nobler expression of the ordinary human life—a "deiform seed" within the soul, growing up into spiritual blossom and fruit. The single condition of this spiritual culture is the Divine Spirit in contact with the human, guiding, educating, enriching, strengthening it. This was their idea of religion, alike against the formal mysticism of the Laudians and the formal opinionativeness of the Puritans. The essence of piety was not in the spiritual performances of the one, nor the spiritual exercises of the other—but in a pure, good, and beautiful life. But then they added—and no set of theologians have ever more emphatically added—such a life can only exist *in* the Divine, and the *Divine is a reality.* The spiritual *is* as truly as, and more truly than, the material. While religion is never to be dissociated from life, and, apart from it, exists only in its simulacra—"rites" or "notions"—it is yet no mere culture of the common external life—no

mere moral coating. It is the growth of the divine side of life, and this side is as real as the natural side; —nay, it is the deeper reality of the two. In this sense religion is distinctive, but in no other.

It is of importance to bring out this aspect of the Christian Rationalism of the seventeenth century, not only because otherwise one of its main aspects would be overlooked, but also because it has suffered misrepresentation on this very point. It was the accusation of its contemporary Puritan and High Church critics, and it is a common assertion of the same critics to this day, that the Cambridge Divines may be considered Christian moralists, but not evangelists. They preached an elevated Christian philosophy, but not the Gospel of divine grace. Now what is the Gospel? and what is divine grace? The Gospel is the news of divine love—the message that God is willing to save sinners, and has sent His Son into the world, that whosoever "believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." This is the very pith of the Evangel, and the writings of the Cambridge Divines are full of it. Divine grace is the reality of divine help to save us when we cannot save ourselves. Moral aspirations, the very highest, unless they spring from a divine source, and lay hold of divine strength, will not bring a man forth from the depths of sin, and set him "upon a rock, establishing his goings." This is the very essence of the Cambridge theology, which not only finds the strength of morality in the Divine, but identifies the moral itself with the Divine. The very idea of good is already the presence of God in hu-

manity. Good and evil, justice and injustice, are manifestations of the divine mind in us, and have otherwise no existence. They are the movements of the Divine Spirit—otherwise they are not realities at all, but mere illusions and conventions. How can a theology like this be accused of undervaluing divine grace, when it finds all its distinction in the exaltation of the Divine?

But according to the very explanation, it may be asked, Does the Cambridge theology not lose the divine in the moral? Yes; but by divinising the moral, not humanising the divine. What it never does is to separate the divine and human, and hold the former apart in sacred rites or sacred doctrine—Pharisees of the affection, or the intellect. This, so far from exalting divine grace, seemed to this theology to sectarianise and degrade it. It seemed to incarnate the living spirit in a dead idol, to venerate the chalice and bread upon the altar, instead of the divine presence, ever working in humanity, and quickening it to a higher life; or to deify the doctrine about the Saviour, instead of the living Saviour Himself. The Divine may, no doubt, be conceived apart from its human manifestations in the higher spiritual instincts of our race—but we can know nothing of it, save in these manifestations. Spirit can only live in spirit, can only be known by spirit. We can only find God in ourselves. The roots of the divine and the human are inseparable; and if we try to tear them asunder, we plunge none the less into materialism because we may be High Church ritualists, or Puritan dogmatists of an extreme kind.

The noble distinction of the Cambridge Divines is that they at once rationalised religion and vindicated its distinctive reality. Faith and reason—the divine and the human—grace and works—were to them inextricably involved. The analysis which tries to separate them, breaks and destroys them. The one is in the other. We cannot reach the higher, save through the lower; the lower is only complete in the higher. But they were so far from ignoring the Divine, or losing it in the human, that their most vital struggle was to maintain and make clear the Divine as the paramount crown and glory of the human. They were, if ever men were, defenders of the faith. Their special labour as Christian Philosophers was to prove that religion was a transcending reality, a substantive power binding the soul to God, revealing God to the soul—a power more real than all the bigotries which simulated it, or all the ceremonies which represented it.

This was their mission against the materialism of their time. On the one side they aimed to purify and elevate the popular religion; on the other they aimed to discover and vindicate a substantive religious sphere, which, however obscured or perverted, was the highest and most indestructible of all spheres of knowledge. The contentions of religious parties had discredited religion altogether. The Cambridge Divines found themselves not merely facing exhausted factions, before whom they sought to present a higher ideal of religion—conciliatory instead of sectarian—but facing what appeared to them a new and formidable foe,

which struck at the very basis of spiritual life, and left no room for the ideas of God and immortality at all. As they fought against a technical and barren theology, so they fought against an undivine and unspiritual philosophy. Hobbes appeared to them an enemy to all religion. It was no matter that he professed to reverence it, and to appropriate and manipulate religious ideas as factors in the organisation of society. Withal he seemed to them to take from these ideas all true basis. A religion born of fear, a Church constituted by mere police authority, outraged all their deepest instincts. They could find no foundation for worship nor for morality, save in the fact of a Divine Spirit in man, witnessing to a Divine Spirit above him. And it became the passion and labour of their lives to vindicate this twofold form of the Divine—God and Immortality.

It is unnecessary for us to say further how they performed this great task. We have dwelt sufficiently upon this aspect of their work, and indicated our estimate of its substantial success. If God and Immortality can be verified by human inquiry and reasoning at all, they can only be verified in *the line of their* thought; that is to say, by recognising the true place of mind in nature, as first and not second —senior and not junior. The soul and God, the Divine in man, and the Divine without him, are essential correlatives. Man is spirit, and not matter; thought, and not thing—if there is a spiritual world at all. As More himself has said in the close of his 'Antidote against Atheism'—"No Spirit,

no God.[1]" It is impossible to advance the basis of proof for the being of a God beyond this, or to rest it anywhere else. The divine Reason is an intuition of the human reason; or, conversely, the human is an index of the Divine, verifying its object by its own light, and revealing in the very depth of its rationality that the sphere of Spirit transcends and encompasses that of Sense. The Divine is the reality. It is substance, and not shadow; or, as all materialism must make it, a mere dream painted by the subtle associative magic of human hopes, and fears, and aspirations. The Spiritual above is the utterance of the spiritual within, and the latter can only be found a reality in the experience of its own transcending nature, one and indivisible — a unity of consciousness which is not mine, but *me*—which no mere material combinations, however they may modify and control it, can be conceived as originating; which, in short, is *before* and not *after* matter; and if it did not precede, could never come out of, or appear within, matter.

It is impossible so far to overrate the services of our Theologians. The exponents and advocates of a comprehensive Church, the purifiers of the popular theology, they were at the same time the great champions of the reality of religion when the excesses of its partisans drove their age to unbelief. They stood in the breach, and fought for

[1] "Nullus spiritus, nullus Deus." Sir William Hamilton quotes from the Latin version (Lect. on Metaphysics, vol. i. p. 32), — "Nullus in Microcosmo spiritus, Nullus in Macrocosmo Deus." But More's words are simply as we have given them in the original English and in his own Latin version.

the good cause with the weapon of reason, when many of the cowardly fanatics who had disgraced it were swept away with the new tide, or were silent in their ignorant and irrational isolation. Their two attitudes are closely akin. It was their deep feeling of the reality of religion, as a living good in humanity, which made them so earnest to save it alike from the excesses of Puritan dogmatism and the invasions of Hobbian speculation. The encumbrance of the one, and the hollowness of the other, they felt as alike fatal to it. It was the same higher rationality of thought which animated them in both cases—in the one, seeking to keep religion true to fact, and in the other to prove that it was a fact, and no mere artifice or convention.

(3.) The political services rendered by our Divines should not be overlooked in any enumeration of their merits. None of them took an active part in political affairs. They were far less prominent in public life than many of the Puritan Divines on the one side, or the Prelatists on the other. Yet the quiet force of their well-considered convictions, and the eclectic spirit which led them to recognise what was due to the several elements of the civil constitution, no less than to the diverse forms of religious life and opinion in England—their conciliatory and enlarged comprehensiveness, in short, in the political no less than in the ecclesiastical complications of the country—exercised a powerful influence on the national mind, and contributed in no small degree to the triumph and settlement of constitutional principles at the Revolution in 1688. It is striking, indeed, to what

extent their enlightened liberality prevailed in all directions, working together as they did without any formal organisation, merely under the impulse of their own high thoughtfulness, and unselfish desire to promote the interests of truth and the rights of all, as citizens. The "subversive paradoxes" of Hobbes, "the nobler but not less visionary model of the republican party headed by Milton," the servile royalism and "passive obedience" of the extreme High Church party, represented by such men as Thorndike and the nonjurors, made more noise and excited more prominent political agitation for a time, but they passed away. It was the glory of the Latitudinarian Divines here, as in other respects, to oppose the force of their calm and thoughtful reasonableness to all such extremes, and to set before the country an idea of the Constitution which was "neither absolutist nor republican," which rested neither "on material force nor unreasoning superstition, but was "equally removed from the pretence of theocratic despotism and the dreams of social democracy." Such an ideal "was provided in the broad and deeply-reasoned premises laid down by members of the Latitudinarian type. The ground which they took up seems to have approached most nearly to that shortly afterwards adopted by the moderate and philosophical section of the early Whig party. Their axioms of polity tended closely to that mixed or constitutional form in accordance with which the relations between sovereign and people have been since more practically defined through the influence of events rather than the progress of legislation. Loyalists at

heart, their regalism was leavened by liberal philosophy." Almost all the influential divines of the Revolution, as we have already said, were trained in the Cambridge school, and carried its principles—if no longer in their purely ideal form—into the regulation of their public conduct. It was easy, of course, for disappointed factions then, as it is easy for their successors in our own day, to attribute the conciliatory and enlightened policy of men like Tillotson or Patrick to ignoble motives of self-interest. But we agree with the writer from whom we have already quoted,[1] that this policy "was the result of long and deep conviction, upheld amid no little peril. It was consistent in them to welcome a policy which, regulating at once the prerogative of the Crown and the immunities of the subject, and reconciling in perpetuity civil freedom with regal privilege, could enlist the spontaneous sympathies and energies of the nation in support of public order and the supremacy of the legislature."

II. We could have wished to close here, but impartial criticism demands from us some notice of the defects as well as the merits of our Theologians. It is the less possible to pass them by that they are so obvious. They lie more on the outside, and are visible to many who have no capacity of appreciating their excellences. All can see their faults of manner, style, and method; but they were also

[1] Rev. Alex. Taylor, Michel Fellow of Queen's College, Oxford, whose criticism of the Cambridge school in the preface to his edition of Patrick's works is, as we formerly said (see p. 22 of this volume), admirable so far as it goes. There is no other modern criticism, indeed, known to us, deserving of attention.

greatly deficient in critical penetration and range, deep-thoughted and comprehensive as they were.

We have already spoken of the defects of the Cambridge Divines as writers. In this respect there is a great difference betwixt them; yet they are one and all behind many of their contemporaries. Hobbes puts them all to shame as a writer. Beside Hales and Chillingworth in our first volume, they fail greatly in clearness and force of style, in directness, readiness, and that felicitous mastery of intellect which so grasps the materials of an argument as to sift from it in the very act what is superfluous and inapplicable, and bring the whole to an effective point. Hales and Chillingworth, it is true, carry less weight of thought. Their minds, if more dexterous, are more concentrated, and purchase something of their comparative ease of movement from the lighter burden which they carry. But they were also by nature more quick-witted and perspicacious. If no less ardent students, they had brought the product of their studies more into the light of day, and tested them in intercourse with men of common intellectual shrewdness and acute literary faculty. It was the misfortune of the Cambridge men to breathe almost uniformly an academic and theological atmosphere; not merely to be in the main recluse students—for all students must be recluse so far—but seldom to emerge into the world of everyday thought and action. Thus all their writings not only smell of the academic lamp, but have the operosity and cumbrousness of the school rather than the finish of the thinker who has been trained, but has forgot his

training in the consciousness of accomplishment and power which it has left behind. They carry their academic trappings with them, whatever they do. They crowd their books with specimens of all the intellectual furniture which they have gathered in the course of their studies. It was an age of painful verbosity and pedantry, save in the very best writers. The lengthiness and tedium of the pulpit infected more or less all forms of composition. Cudworth and More are not only not above their contemporaries in this respect, but they have their own vices of style engrafted upon the common pedantry of the time.

Their lack of method is a still more serious fault. The external disfigurement and formlessness of their writings might be excused if there were order within. But their thought is sometimes unorganised as well as their style. It is insufficiently laid out and disentangled in its details. The reader has to bring its parts together and reconstitute it as he best can. We refer especially to More, whose writings are as voluminous as those of all the others together. In him, especially, a deficient method and lack of critical penetration are apparent. But Cudworth's great work also, with all its merits, is greatly wanting in organisation. Rich, massive, and powerful as the theological mind of the seventeenth century was—it was, with rare exceptions, wholly uncritical. It accumulated knowledge with a marvellous power and profusion of learning, but it failed in discriminating its sources, or estimating with any degree of accuracy its true proportions and value. The apparently un-

hesitating acceptance of the Apostles' Creed as the composition of the twelve apostles, even by so inquisitive an intellect as Chillingworth, not to speak of Jeremy Taylor, is a conspicuous instance of this uncritical habit, and failure to sift the grounds of their knowledge. It is well to point out this, but it is also well to remember how slow the progress of criticism is in reference to theological ideas and matters of Church history. Coleridge has made far too much of it, after his wont; while he shows himself, in the very 'Notes' in which he takes Taylor to task on this point, that his own mind had by no means cleared itself from unhistorical preconceptions as to the origin and nature of Christianity.[1]

The Cambridge Divines show their lack of critical and historical judgment in three important particulars—(*a*) Their confusion of Platonism and Neo-Platonism; (*b*) Their speculative fancifulness; and (*c*) Their misappreciation of evidence.

(*a*) The confusion between Platonism and Neo-Platonism underlies their whole writings. They are,

[1] All differences in the Christian Church might be tolerated, according to Coleridge, but such a difference as is represented by Trinitarianism and Socinianism or Humanitarianism. But is there any historical student nowadays who would deny that the primitive Jewish Church contained those who could be pronounced Humanitarians from a modern point of view? "Contraries cannot be true. The Christ cannot be both mere man and incarnate God." But the question, according to Coleridge himself, is not one for definition or conceptual logic at all; and why, therefore, should there be such an intolerable inconsistency betwixt a higher and a lower view of that which in itself is undefinable? Nothing regarding the origin of Christianity is probably more certain than that the Nicene definitions of the person of Christ would have been utterly unintelligible and unacceptable to the primitive Jewish Christian.

as Coleridge says, Plotinists rather than Platonists. The theosophic reveries of the Alexandrian school fitted more aptly their own supersensual imaginations; and so they pass from the original to the later Platonic writings with the most indiscriminating indifference. They betray no suspicion of the enormous interval of thought betwixt Plato and Plotinus, still less of any growth or development of thought in Plato himself. What are now supposed to be his later 'Dialogues,' chiefly interest them—the Theætetus, Sophistes, Parmenides, above all the Timæus. The second book of the 'Immutable Morality' is nearly half composed of quotations from the Theætetus; and the lengthened discussion in the fourth chapter of the 'Intellectual System on the Platonic Trinity' rests in the main on the Timæus and the Neo-Platonic writers. Of the latter, Plotinus[1] is the chief favourite; but Proclus[2] and Hierocles[3] are also abundantly quoted. Themistius[4] and two writers of the later Neo-Platonic school, Damascius and his disciple Simplicius,[5] along with the Trismegistic writings, frequently reappear in their pages. Their minds were drenched with the speculations of the Alexandrian school in all its forms. Like the members of this school they credited Plato with a sort of semi-inspiration, and believed, as we have more than once seen, that he derived his wisdom from Moses. The extraordinary assumption of both More and

[1] 203-262 A.D.
[2] 412-485.
[3] 450?
[4] D. 390.
[5] Both belong to the sixth century, and took refuge at the court of the Persian monarch Chosröes when Justinian closed the schools of heathen philosophy.

Cudworth, that all divine philosophy found in heathen writings is to be traced definitely to the Hebrews—that the original atomic doctrine and all the teaching of Pythagoras and of Plato have come from a Jewish fountain-head—may be considered the climax of their uncriticalness. More is absolutely possessed with this notion, and recurs to it over and over again as the explanation of all the anticipations of Christian truth which appear to meet him everywhere in the Platonic and Neo-Platonic writings.

It is needless to indicate how different in many respects is the spirit of our theologians from the genuine Platonic spirit—the one clear, bright, poetic, dramatic, scientific rather than mystical; the other vague, serious, and exclusively theological. The mysticism of Plato is a mysticism half poetic and half philosophic, touched with the brilliant and changing hues of a mythology half real, half ideal. The mysticism of More and Smith is purely spiritual and theosophic—an obscure region bounded by supersensual realities, and the creature not of fancy and imagination, but of a passionate and fertile faith. The vivacity, inquisitiveness, common-sense, and dialectical badinage of the Platonic Socrates, have nothing in common with the profound but sombre and unwieldy thoughtfulness of the Cambridge Divines. The Platonism which dominated their thoughts and coloured their theology, and impressed more or less all their speculations, was not the Platonism of Plato. They never thought of distinguishing the varied elements of his philosophy in themselves or

in relation to Neo-Platonic speculations. It is no easy task even for modern criticism to discriminate the growth of the Platonic doctrine, or to make out clearly whether it has any growth or consistent development at all. But the very idea of such a development had not even dawned upon our Divines. The suspicion that Plotinus and Proclus, while building upon the Platonic basis, may have had little or none of the spirit of the master-builder, never disturbed them. Platonism was to them a vast mass of transcendental Thought, dating from Pythagoras and even Moses, and stretching downwards through Alexandrian and medieval Jewish schools; and it was this Platonism of tradition—of the successive spiritualistic schools which had contended for a super-sensual philosophy, and peopled the world of faith with many fantastic reveries—which ruled their spirits and inspired their philosophic ambition. In this sense alone can they be called Platonists.

It is to be remembered that the age of historical criticism was yet unborn. Tradition, philosophic, patristic, scientific, lay like an incubus upon the intelligence of the seventeenth century. Even contemporary philosophies were imperfectly understood and criticised. How much more ancient systems? Descartes and Hobbes were combated zealously, but not analysed or critically explained, or fully comprehended in the totality of their principles, and the relation which they bore to one another. How then could this be expected in the case of Pythagoras, or Plato, or Plotinus? Creeds and theologies passed without examination. Supposed heresies were vig-

orously refuted; but they were not challenged and asked to give an account of themselves. No one inquired, or at least inquired with any critical capacity of getting a true answer, as to the growth of the Apostles' Creed, or the Athanasian Creed. Why should not Pythagoras have learned his wisdom from the Jews, and all that was good in Greek thought have come from the great Hebrew seer? We have had speculations in our own day as to the analogies betwixt the Messiah and the Hellenic Apollo. No amount of mere learning can impart the faculty of criticism and of comparative historical induction. Especially where religious enthusiasms come into play, knowledge without insight and largeness of thought seems sometimes only to lead further astray. And uncritical tradition, in many forms, still lies with such a weight on all Christian Churches, that we may easily understand, while we regret, the inability of the Cambridge Platonists to disentangle the folds of traditionary theosophy which enveloped all their thought.

(*b*) Their speculative fancifulness was largely due to the same habits of mind. They had no adequate criteria of knowledge. They failed in distinguishing the subjective and objective in their respective elements—what was due to the conditions of the problem they discussed, and what came from their own preconception—a failure more or less of all speculation. Yet it was more than usually conspicuous in our philosophers. Coleridge has said of them—"What they all wanted was a pre-inquisition into the mind as part organ, part constituent of all

knowledge—an examination of the scales, weights, and measures abstracted from the objects to be weighed or measured by them."[1] This expresses very much the same defect; only we have hardly a right to expect from them such a criticism of the sources of knowledge as Coleridge desiderates. We have no warrant to look, as he implies, for a Kant among them, or in the century to which they belong. Such anticipations of philosophical history are unreasonable. The Cambridge Philosophers, however, fell below the speculative method of their own age. They were the victims of fantastic conceptions, no less than of futile traditions, from which their own reasonable culture, and the new spirit of inquiry which surrounded them, should have delivered them. Students of Descartes, they failed to learn the chief lesson of his philosophy—the necessity of some clear principle or ground of certitude on which to base all their thought—some touchstone by which to test it. Advocates of Reason, they yet never asked themselves plainly what is reason, and how rational and irrational ideas are to be distinguished, not merely in the sphere of religion, but of speculation. Their Rationalism was adequate to sift the notional dogmatism of the popular religion, and the vagaries of Quakerism and other enthusiasms; but it failed to reach the sources of their own thought, or to clear their own speculative vision. Hence all their dreams of plastic and vital natures, of the pre-existence and hierarchies of souls; and generally the Neo-Platonic fantasies with which they

[1] Notes on English Divines, i. 351, 352.

filled their minds without any suspicion of their irrational incoherence and absurdity.

(*c*) We have already, more than once, adverted to their misappreciation of evidence as to the supernatural or spiritual world. Their studies had furnished them with no adequate criterion of evidence, scientific or historical. Their ignorance of natural causes they shared with their generation. Their credulity as to ghosts and apparitions was the inheritance of generations of credulity. It was almost a part of the common faith of the Church. They are excusable here, therefore, as in other points. It is no reproach to Cudworth and More that they believed in ghosts. There were but few in the seventeenth century who ventured to disbelieve in them. But it may be fairly urged against them that they so little appreciated either the nature of evidence on the one hand, or the true character of the supernatural on the other hand, as to suppose that such stories of apparitions could possibly convince intelligent minds of the existence of spirits, in opposition to the materialism which they saw rising around them. To place a good cause on a false issue is not only a peril to the cause, but an impediment to the progress of thought. And More and Glanvill, in this respect, not only did not represent the rationality of their age, but were doing what they could to retard it. They have greatly suffered in consequence, more than they deserved. These spiritualistic follies have clung to their name and reputation, when their true enlightenment, and the rational elevation and radiant warmth of their com-

prehensive Christianity has been forgotten. More's credulity, vast as it was, and the cloudy unsubstantiality of many of his speculations, never obscured the clearness of his moral vision, nor the essential rationality of his theological principles. He and all his school were still ready to test every form of spiritual truth by the light of the higher truths in man—the 'divine sagacity,' or "image of the royal and divine *logos*"—which they might mistake and misinterpret, but which they never thought of superseding or displacing.

It cannot be denied that the Cambridge Platonists failed in much that they attempted. They essayed anew, in a distracted and unbelieving age, to verify the Divine—not merely to witness it to man's reason and conscience, but to construe it into a Philosophy, and rear a Science of religion. They failed partly by reason of their own weakness and errors, but especially because the time was not yet ripe for the development of an adequate spiritual Philosophy. Such a Philosophy can never be based merely, or even mainly, on the private excogitations of thinkers, however great. It can never be a product of mere intuition or mere logic, however exalted. Nor yet can it be a mere revival of any past phase of thought, however noble and significant. Platonism, even in its highest form, is but a splendid speculation—higher than any single effort of thought will probably ever reach again. But we cannot build a shelter for catholic thought out of the most splendid fragment of speculation. Such a stately dome can only rise gradually on a comprehensive basis of Historic

criticism, which shall take in not merely this or that phase of speculation, but the whole growth of religious experience of which we have become the heirs. To this extent the positive or scientific method must be universally adopted—only enlarged to the area of a genuinely comprehensive induction. A true Religious Philosophy can only be built up slowly by the process which verifies while it accumulates, and tests every addition to the fabric of discovery before it ventures to lay it to the pile. The religious experience of mankind through all the ages of historic and even pre-historic growth, is as much a reality as any other phase of his experience—a good deal more a reality than most others. Religion has been and remains the most powerful factor of human history. Amidst all its changes it has been this, and is likely to continue to be so. The idea that human progress shall ever transcend religion, or lay it aside, is the wildest dream that ever entered into the uncultured and semi-savage heart that still lurks in the bosom of modern civilisation. There it is, and has been always in the world, moving in some form or other its highest minds to their highest significance. There is no science, however exclusive, can refuse to recognise such facts, by the very right which it itself has to exist, and inquire into its own series of facts. But theologians and Christian philosophers must come to acknowledge—that religious facts are not, any more than other facts, of "private interpretation." They are individual, it is true, and in a certain sense cannot be investigated too closely as elements of indi-

vidual experience; but in order to be fully and comprehensively understood, they must also be regarded as parts of the common experience of humanity through all its stages of growth. They must be studied not only in their individualistic, but in their generalised form, as they appear in their gradual and complete development in history, before we can interpret them right, and form even a proximate theory of their true value. We must have, in short, some adequate criticism of religious ideas in all their mysterious growth, dependency, and involvement, before we can venture to construct any adequate theory or Philosophy of Religion. All true thought is merely fact idealised; all right theory is merely experience generalised. No thought that is worth anything can ever rise above an historic basis. No more than science can transcend nature, can religious thought transcend history. It may illuminate history, but it must first of all grow out of it; and a Philosophy of Religion, before it aims at settling for us the great problems which it involves, must be content to drudge for long yet in reading the varied records of religious experience which modern historical criticism has only begun to unfold and arrange. Light, therefore, is not to be sought in any sudden illumination, nor progress in any pet theories of modern, any more than of ancient, thinkers—but only in patient study and faithful generalisation. The vast volume of religious experience will slowly unfold its characters to inductive and patient thinkers, as other volumes of experience have done. And as this volume is steadily read—its pages compared, and

their facts co-ordinated and explained—the divine meaning will become clearer. A Religious Philosophy will at least become possible when it is sought in this way,—not in any favourite speculation of this or that thinker, however great—but in the comprehensive interpretation of the religious consciousness working through all history, and gathering light and force as it works onward.

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